VALLEY VOICE

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Beware of ObamaCare Scams

APRIL HEATH PASTIS

The Better Business Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission are warning consumers not to be fooled by people trying to take advantage of confusion over the Affordable Care Act (ACA), better known as ObamaCare.

Scammers are using the implementation of the ObamaCare as the latest opportunity to steal people's identities, said Gabriela Mendoza, Better Business Bureau assistant director of business services for Central California.

Obamacare scams come in a variety of forms. Consumers' complaints allege that scammers are contacting them by phone, fax, email and even in person. Some scammers claim to be government employees, tricking consumers into revealing their bank account numbers in order to sign up for fake health care plans. Others are asking for social security numbers in order for consumers to continue their eligibility for Medicare.

Mendoza explained that the most recent scam involves consumers getting a phone call from someone claiming to be from the government. The caller tells the potential victim that he or she needs an ObamaCare insurance card. Then the con artist tells the consumer that he or she must provide personal information such as a bank account or social security number in order to get the card.

"Never give out personal information over the phone," Mendoza warned.

If scammers get your information, they may commit identity theft, charge your credit cards, empty your checking account or open new credit cards or bank accounts. They could try to take out loans in your name, or trick you into buying or mailing "pre-paid cards" to pay for coverage.

Certain fraudsters are intimidating consumers into disclosing information by claiming "it's the law" or that "the government now requires it." Some consumers are threatened with jail time if they do not purchase fake insurance cards. The only financial penalties associated with families and individuals who don't obtain insurance doesn't take effect until 2014 and contains no jail penalty.

In addition, the only place you can get ACA insurance is through the Health Insurance Marketplace, where you can find health coverage that fits your budget and meets your needs. In California, the marketplace is at CoveredCa.com. If you already have insurance, you don't need to do anything. Seniors are especially targeted, so the AARP is reminding seniors that if they already have Medicare or Medicaid, they don't need to do anything.

"Consumers must be vigilant," said Eric Kanefsky, director of the FTC, Division of Consumer Affairs. "Con artists are constantly seeking new ways to dupe victims into giving up their bank account information and opening themselves up to identity theft. During the coming months, many will prey on confusion about the Affordable Care Act."

Blair Looney, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving Central California says, "Consumers should always be cautious when anyone calls you asking for personal information of any kind." The government will never call you, so if you receive such a call hang up, he added.

Mendoza said that reports of these scams have not yet hit the Central Valley, but cases have been reported throughout California and the nation. The FTC said it expects complaints to rise once health insurance exchanges are in full swing.

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The Sequoia Mall on Mooney Boulevard in Visalia. Photo by: Steve Pastis

Sequoia Mall Escrow to Close on November 15

CATHERINE DOE

Escrow on the Sequoia Mall is set to close November 15th, according to John Dubois, an owner of Core Commercial, the listing broker on the property.

"I'm fairly positive the sale will go through" said Dubois, "The buyers have passed through several stages where they have put down significant amounts of non-refundable money. They seem serious." The buyers are in the due diligence stage of the purchase and are scheduled to waive all contingencies on October 11th. According to city staff, the purchase is a short sale. A short sale is when the property is being sold for less than what is owed to the bank. The estimated purchase price is said to have been $10-14 million.

Until recently, rumors have ranged from a local owner buying the property and filling the mall with tenants to out-of-town owners planning on tearing it down. The identity of the buyer is still unknown.

Core Commercial specializes in retail leasing and retail sales, and is based in Sacramento. According to their website, "As a boutique firm we are small enough to collaborate and share information about retail tenants, lease rates and capital market trends, and yet we're large enough to provide all the resources and support available to the national firms."

The listing description for the mall says, "this offering portion of Sequoia Mall includes 228,789 square footage of gross leasable area on 24.4 acres. It includes the enclosed mall portion, theatre, one anchor (vacant) and multiple outparcels and buildable pads. The offering also includes Tower Plaza, occupied by Bed Bath & Beyond, Marshalls, and a bridal boutique." The purchase may have been made more complicated because parts of the mall are independently owned and might, or might not be, part of the sale, such as Sears, Hobby Lobby and RaboBank.

The ladies in charge of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) book sale were kept in limbo about whether the mall would be available for their fundraising event. Initially, the mall manager, Diane Sherrill, told them not to count on the mall being available. But last Friday, Sherrill green-lighted the sale, insisting that she still didn't know what was going on. At the same time, the organizer of Just Between Friends, a consignment sale in the former Ross, was told by Sherrill the mall was making no further commitments when she asked about the space again for this December.

Although located at one of the busiest intersections in Visalia, the Sequoia Mall has always struggled with a high vacancy rate. In 1998, the mall was sold to KIMCO Realty Corporation which is headquartered in New Hyde Park, New York. In addition to owning and operating one of the country's largest portfolios of neighborhood and community shopping centers, KIMCO holds interests in shopping centers in Puerto Rico, Canada, Mexico and South

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Steve Nelsen Up for Second Visalia City Council Term

STAFF REPORTS

Steve Nelsen first ran for the Visalia City Council on the premise that, while the city talks about doing things, "often they are put on a shelf and die and never get dusted off." This concerns Nelsen, who, in bringing to office a desire to serve the public, has since discovered an even deeper love of service to the citizen. It is, he says, what he is all about. "I have a passion to help," he elaborates, "to find solutions."

In his term of office, these solutions have ranged from the founding of the animal shelter, construction of which is scheduled to begin shortly after the new year, to finding property for Imagine-U, and the establishment of a new fire station for the southwest quadrant of the city. An outspoken advocate of public safety, Nelsen is one of only two council members to have completed at least 11 of the 12 programs of the city's volunteer police service. Ironically, he is prohibited from actually serving on this because he currently sits on the council. "But that's fine," Nelsen says.

City Council Member Steve Nelsen

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Valley Voice and Clay Café to Host Candidate Meet and Greet

Come meet the Visalia City Council candidates October 22nd from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Clay Café. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be served. The setting is informal so that Visalia citizens can ask the candidates about issues that concern them. Five candidates will be vying for three vacant seats. Michael Brown and Victor Salinas are non-incumbents. Come meet them and the other candidates. Join us to learn more about our city and its future leaders.

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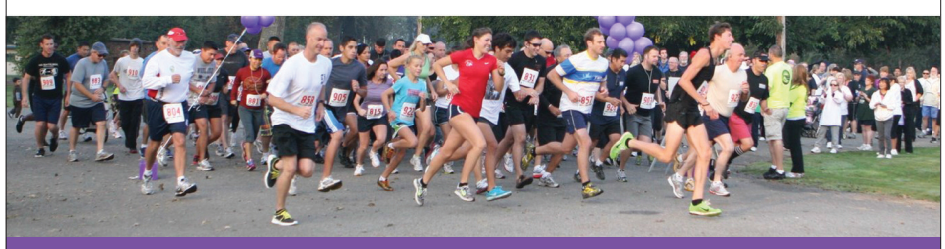

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Where's Lincoln When You Need Him?

To tolerate in silence
and endure these freakin' bigots
is itself akin to violence--
let's cork these leakin' spigots.

Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on the first of January, 1863, in a time vastly more difficult than we endure today. We call it the Civil War. This year, merely droning, President Obama declared June Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. So we've come a long way--right? Not if you sit on Porterville's city council.

On the 17th of last month--Constitution Day, no less--Porterville's mayor and vice mayor, Virginia Gurrola and Pete McCracken respectively, were drummed out of ceremonial office in a 3-2 vote by fellow council members Brian Ward, Cameron Hamilton and Greg Shelton. Why? Because of their support of a proclamation naming June LGBT Pride Month. This was no endorsement of the presidential declaration: rather, a Porterville resident brought forth for mayoral signature a proclamation specific to his city. Porterville has a council/manager civic government, which means a city manager is in charge while the mayor is chiefly a figurehead with limited duties. And one of these is the discretion whether or not to issue proclamations. After a summer spent wrangling, the council not only rescinded the LGBT proclamation in favor of a milder "good will to all," but replaced its own leadership.

First, though, some history.

In 2008, while the Mormon Church poured untold millions into an effort supporting California's Proposition 8--which proscribed same-sex marriage in this state--Porterville City Council Member Ward, himself a Mormon and the author of "good will to all," called for a statement in favor of the proposition's passage. Then-mayor Hamilton approved, and Porterville's city council thus became the only entity of any kind in the state to officially endorse Proposition 8. Ward and Hamilton sit on the current Porterville City Council and, with Shelton's accession, were able to orchestrate this new symphony of intolerance. In fact, Hamilton is the new mayor. Care to venture a guess as to who the new vice mayor is? Yes--it's Ward. Surprised?

In a council/manager government, the position of mayor and vice mayor are often rotated among council members. In Porterville, according to its Charter Review Committee, which sets the rules for such things, a term of office is two years. Customarily, a rotation is accomplished in cycle with municipal elections. But Gurrola was cashiered barely a year into her term. And the vice mayor, who in rotation frequently ascends to the center chair, was in this case also sent packing. Definitely not business as usual. But did this unsavory manoeuvre violate any Charter Review Committee rules? Not technically, according to City Attorney Julia Lew, "because they can do it any time." That's right, folks--they could do it so frequently as every meeting if they chose to, without so much as the check of a super-majority (4-1) requirement for off-cycle irregularities. Hamilton made it clear. In making a unilateral decision, Gurrola fell afoul of the council and was ousted strictly for that. In other words, Porterville's mayor and vice mayor were relieved simply because three of its five city council members so vehemently disagreed with June's LGBT Pride Month proclamation.

Both Hamilton and Ward have sought to justify their position. Ward said he drafted the "good will for all" so as not to set "one group off against another." Fundamentally, Ward would deny any proclamation that "pointed to religion or to race or to gender." Seriously? Are there no Christmas--as opposed to Holiday--events he smiles upon? Is he against Black History Month? How about Mothers' Day? The latter two were created by proclamation. But more insidious still is Hamilton, who cloaks his position by naming gay relatives "in Hollywood. " This sounds too much like a racist denying his racism by dint of claiming the acquaintance of someone of a different race. Worse, Hamilton refuses to "marginalize" those of the LGBT community "down to one identifier." Yet it is precisely this "identifier" he is discriminating against. Clearly, former mayor Gurrola was seeking a more inclusive stance for Porterville. What do you suppose beats in the chests of Hamilton and Ward?

Considering their previous support of Proposition 8, these rationalizations are sad, tawdry and tired. Certainly, they are risible.

With a population of 55,000, Porterville is modestly sized. And while larger cities might tend to be more liberal, we still do not hear of Porterville-esque wrangling from yet tinier towns. What the city needs is a Lincoln, not the Three Stooges--and the only way to land such a person is to elect him. Are three people really speaking for 55,000 here?

I don't think so. I think the Porterville City Council has run rough-shod over our most marginalized of communities. Can you truly picture it behaving similarly in regard to another minority? Of course not! But in this case, apparently, they can get away with it. Somebody please explain to me why this is not just naked bigotry.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Notebook

CATHERINE DOE

GEORGE RADANOVICH MULLS RUN FOR GOVERNOR

Republicans might not have to find someone to throw under bus after all to run for governor. Former Congressman George Radanovich from Mariposa has just stepped forward to fill the bill. Radanovich announced last Thursday in an email that he is mulling a run, touting a "program of rebuilding the private sector and then cutting government."

Of course Republicans already have two candidates in Abel Maldonado and Tim Donnelly, who have been fundraising for months. But the party might just be hoping that these two go away. Neither has inspired the initial enthusiasm of 2010 Republican gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman, who preached fiscal restraint during her campaign while spending $178.5 million. She lost by a landslide to Democrat Jerry Brown, who spent a paltry $36.7 million.

Do Republicans doubt that Brown will win easily? I think they are just trying to avoid a massacre.

Radanovich is definitely more likable than Whitman, but his belief in reducing government to increase the influence of the church is not going to fly in California, not even with the majority of California Republicans. Also, any whiff of being out of touch will his sink his ship just like it did Meg's. It's early innings yet, but after Radanovich's exploratory committee comes back with their first results, I'd be surprised if he ever filed papers to run.

To learn more on Radanovich's vision for California click on the links to Restore Fresno and Restore California on his website, thefourinstitutions.com.

Radanovich served the 19th Congressional District from 1995 to 2011. He chose not to seek re-election to congress as his wife fought ovarian cancer that eventually claimed her life in 2010.

RUDY MENDOZA TO GET PRIMARIED

Rudy Mendoza is not an incumbent, so technically he can't be primaried. But after reading the musings of candidate Ether Barajas on her campaign Facebook page, it's the typical moderate Republican getting challenged by a Tea Party-leaning Christian conservative.

On June 26th, for a cost of $50 at the door, you could have participated in Esther Barajas' campaign kick-off party for State Assembly District 26, currently held by Connie Conway.

New to the political arena, we know that Barajas is against gun control, against immigration reform, and thinks aloud about Tulare County joining Siskiyou and Modoc Counties in voting on seceding from the state. Barajas' political positions might make her popular with a segment of the Republican Party but will most likely deny her a victory in the general election. She does pose a serious threat in the primary though to Rudy Mendoza who announced his candidacy for the 26th Assembly seat earlier this year.

The Republican Primary will be in June of 2014

Registered Republicans dominate Democrats in the 26th district by a huge margin, but the current assembly member, Connie Conway, is a moderate, and very well liked by her constituents. Sending an ultra conservative to run in the November election may result in handing over a solidly Republican seat to the Democrats.

Being the Mayor of Woodlake and Rep Nunes' local field representative, Mendoza has some name recognition and more experience. But since 2010, far more veteran politicians have been primaried and lost to virtual unknowns all over the country.

For what it is worth Barajas has 3,362 facebook friends to Mendoza's 798.

DEMOCRATS RETAIN THEIR SUPER MAJORITY

With the election of Freddie Rodriguez, of Pomona City, to State Assembly District 52 last Thursday, Democrats have once again secured a super majority in both houses. Assembly district 45 remains vacant but the results of its election in November will not affect the Democrat's hold on California's legislature. On the Senate side, a victory by Holly Mitchell for the 26th district bolsters Democrats two-thirds majority in that house. Twenty-seven seats are needed for a super majority in the senate and Democrats hold 28.

MICHAEL BROWN UNVEILS NEW CAMPAIGN SLOGAN

If you haven't noticed Visalia City Council candidate Michael Brown's new campaign signs, they promote "smart growth." The choice of slogan stems from his conversations with Visalia residents who don't believe the city's growth has been well thought out. He doesn't think so either. "The general plan needs some work," said Brown, but he added there are no simple answers. He explained that there are two general city plans, the European model, where the community radiates from a center core and the Vegas model, where the community is spread out. Visalia is moving towards the Vegas model. "In the short term, it's ok, but in the long term that model won't work," said Brown.

AMANDA RENTERIA TO CHALLENGE VALADAO IN THE 21ST CONGRESSIONAL SEAT

Woodlake native Amanda Renteria has launched her campaign for the 21st Congressional District seat currently held by David Valadao, R-Hanford. In August, she moved with her husband and two children to Selma after a lengthy stint in Washington, DC, where she was the first Latina U.S. Senate chief of staff.

Renteria's candidacy could well make the 21st Congressional District race one of the nation's most closely watched and the target of considerable outside spending. The National Republican Congressional Committee has already established a misleading website, amandarenteriaforcongress.com. At first it looks like a typical anti Democrat candidate website, but is actually a Republican fundraising tool, as evidence by the huge green "Donate" button in the middle of the page.

Although Democrats enjoy a 47% - 32% voter registration advantage, the last time the district had a Democratic representative was in 1981. Of course, the district has been redrawn, but Republican Representative Valadao had an easy victory with the current demographics. Valadao, a first-term Congressman, was elected in 2012. His district includes all of Kings County and portions of Tulare, Fresno and Kern counties.

RUBEN MACARENO CONSIDERING A RUN FOR ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 26

The list of candidates for Assembly District 26 is getting crowded. Ruben Macareno just announced Friday afternoon that he is considering a run for the seat currently held by Connie Conway of Tulare. Macareno is the chairman of the Tulare County Democratic Party.

Macareno said he has formed an exploratory committee for his probable run.

In addition to heading up the local party, Macareno is executive member of the California Democratic Party, was a district delegate at the 2012 Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., and is president and founder of Latino Democrats of Tulare County.

Macareno is a former Los Angeles Times newsroom administrator and an Alumni Scholar from California State University, Los Angeles. He is a graduate from Exeter Union High School and Farmersville schools. His nephew, Raymond Macareno, ran unsuccessfully for the Visalia City Council and his late brother, Martin, was a Farmersville school board member.

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Andria Rousseau, Mike Washam, Marilu Henner, Gene Rousseau and Caroline Arron. Photo by Tulare County Film Commission.

Tulare County Makes Pitch to Hollywood Stars

STEVE PASTIS

The Tulare County Film Commission was busy at events surrounding the recent Emmy Awards, talking to Hollywood decision-makers about bringing their film projects to the county and offering them products grown here.

"The idea was to literally have them taste our county," said Tulare County Film Commissioner Eric Coyne, explaining the county's strategy that weekend. "You get 30 seconds to make an impression, so we would tell people that we grow virtually everything except coconuts, coffee and bananas."

Coyne, along with Mike Washam, county economic development director, and Jean Rousseau, county administrative officer, and his wife, Andria, represented Tulare County, making sure that those visiting their booth knew the advantages of filming here.

"We don't charge any filming fees," said Coyne, adding that the county is more interested in bringing movie, television and commercial production here for the money spent on meals, hotel rooms and shopping. "Anson Williams (an actor on "Happy Days" and now an independent producer) was very interested because we said we're only a three or three-and-a-half hour drive. You shoot here for a few days and you go home on the weekend. You don't have to go to Montana. We can be Montana."

Another producer wanted to do a camping film, and had discussed the project with county representatives at Oscar events earlier this year. Coyne suggested Balch Park as a location, telling him, "It's like Yosemite but without all the people."

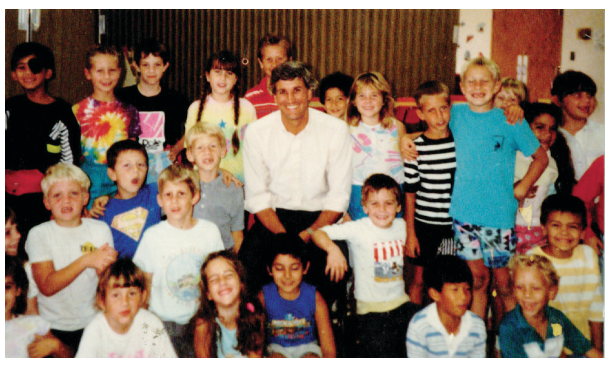
Coyne considers the trip very productive. "We had three solid prospect leads," he said.

Thirty-five businesses had tables at the pre-Emmy event, including Stafford's Famous Chocolates from Porterville; Jewels by Tina, based in Three Rivers; Essential Potion from Tulare; and Setton Farms of Terra Bella.

The county's presence was assisted by Suzi Picaso, a former Lindsay city council member who now works for the Borgnine Group, doing make-up for celebrities.

Greg Collins for Visalia City Council

... planning for the next generation



"One generation plants the tree and the other gets the shade"

Serving this community has given me great joy and I'm grateful to Visalians who have entrusted me with the responsibility of helping to guide the city for 22 years! I look forward to the numerous challenges and opportunities Visalia and the city council will face in the future. I hope you'll vote for me in the upcoming city council election so together we can ensure that Visalia continues to be the "Jewel of the Valley."

We need to:

- Invest in public safety to keep our citizens safe
- Solve our groundwater overdraft problem
- Preserve the agricultural land that surrounds Visalia
- Continue to pump life into our one-of-kind downtown
- Discourage sprawl and promote urban infill and concentric growth
- Work on resolving the homeless issue in Visalia
- Work with the Oval and Washington neighborhood groups and families to support their efforts to revitalize the areas through providing better lighting, more aggressive code enforcement and public safety involvement

Contributions: Greg Collins for Visalia City Council
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More Asian Citrus Psyllid Found in Tulare County

On September 24, the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's office announced that one additional Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) had been detected on a trap south of the city of Exeter. Six days later, two additional ACP were detected on traps north of Eckert Field near Strathmore and northeast of Ducor.

These detections were confirmed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), which continues to utilize traps and surveys of the county in order to determine the extent of these infestations. The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and CDFA will work collaboratively to determine what steps are taken next.

"It is very disappointing to hear that psyllids are being moved into a new part of our county," said Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner Marilyn Kinoshita, who pointed out that every resident of Tulare County plays a vital role in assuring that ACP is not spread from other parts of the state. "One of my neighbors brought over a plastic bag containing citrus fruit and leaves, which showed signs of scale infestation." She added that she wanted to be cautious and not cause harm for our local citrus producers.

The Asian citrus psyllid is an invasive species of grave concern because it can carry the disease huanglongbing (HLB), also known as citrus greening. All citrus and closely related species are susceptible hosts for both the insect and the disease. There is no cure once a tree becomes infected. The diseased tree will decline in health, producing bitter, misshaped fruit until it dies. To date, HLB has been detected on just one residential property in Hacienda Heights, a city in Los Angeles County.

Kinoshita points out that her staff will support the efforts of our $750 million citrus industry, as well as our residential citrus owners. "I want to emphasize that every citizen of our county plays a role in assuring that ACP is not spread from other parts of the state."

Maps and current information are available on the Agricultural Commissioner's website by visiting http://agcomm.co.tulare.ca.us/default/. Residents in the area who think they may have seen the pest are urged to call CDFA's Pest Hotline at 1-800-491-1899 or the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner.

Tulare County Budget Surpasses One Billion Dollars

CATHERINE DOE

For the first time ever, Tulare County has a budget over $1 billion. Several factors, including an increase in property taxes, increased state revenues and debt pay-downs, contributed to this--which has allowed the county to give most employees a three percent pay raise, unfreeze some positions and increase the reserve fund by $2 million.

Both Supervisor Pete Vander Poel and Supervisor Steve Worthley expressed concern that the county held, at $22 million, too small a reserve, and encouraged the administration to set a more realistic amount. Jean Rousseau, county administrative officer, said the rule of thumb is to have a two months' reserve. Tulare County has that. Fresno County, conversely, with a budget of $1.7 billion, holds only $14.4 million in reserve.

Rousseau said that fiscally conservative spending policies from the board of supervisors and a statewide economic recovery allowed Tulare County to make positive steps this year. "We are in good shape but still have work to do," said Rousseau. "The bottom line is I changed my mind from describing our budget from 'stem the bleeding' to 'stabilized.'

"Not facing a budget deficit for the second straight year means we can focus on improving our organization as a whole and continue to provide important services to Tulare County residents," Vander Poel said. "I would like to thank all department heads and employees for their excellent work."

"While the economy is turning around, we will still remain conservative to ensure we can continue to avoid drastic measures while facing unknown economic circumstances," said Rousseau.

After the budget presentation was finished, Supervisor Worthley thanked Rousseau and his staff for an excellent report and all their hard work. "In other counties, the budget presentation goes on for days and days and causes lots of strife," said Worthley. In Tulare County Supervisors' chambers, it took about 20 minutes to pass the $1 billion budget with a 5-0 vote.

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Visalia Rescue Mission: Part of the Solution

CATHERINE DOE

Everyone agrees that the homeless problem in Visalia is getting worse. But what is Visalia doing about it? The answer is, a lot. The City has passed ordinances to reduce the blight caused by the homeless, has organized the SMART team, and has worked with local organizations, such as the Visalia Rescue Mission, (VRM) to get the homeless off the streets.

"The Rescue Mission is on the leading edge of addressing the 'free rent camper' issue otherwise known as homeless. Everyone and anyone should support their efforts for a safer Visalia," said Bill Huott of the North Visalia Advisory Committee.

The VRM has been part of the fabric of this city for thirty-two years. They serve 500 meals a day and offer 126 beds per night for those without a roof over their head. For the larger community they serve Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas meals to anyone who shows up. But the VRM does more than just give hand outs. According to Jessica Cavale, "We don't want to enable the homeless. We want to see their lives change and become productive members of society. Our goal is to hold people accountable." To hold people accountable the VRM offers 50 beds in a recovery and life skills program that reintegrates the homeless back into society.

The Rescue Mission is a Christian-based organization. But anyone can come to the mission to get a free meal or shower. To get a bed for the night, though, one must attend a chapel service from 6:00 – 7:00. "We want to show them the love of Jesus Christ through some of these tangible ways, like offering a meal or a shower," said Cavale. According to VRM's Hope Now magazine, "A meal may not seem like a lot, but for the guests that come to the Visalia Rescue Mission, a meal can mean the start to a new life. There are people who come to the VRM for a meal who get plugged into case management, rehab programs, housing options and job opportunities. For them a meal is just the start to life change through Jesus Christ."

In September the VRM opened up a new community center that they built from the ground up. The upstairs needs to be finished and they are still paying off the downstairs, so the center is a work in progress. But they already have their case managers and counselors, and are conducting classes in the beautifully constructed downstairs. The community center is where VRM runs their Next Steps program, which provides life skills classes and also helps people get their GED, build their resume, and provide work experience in the VRM's warehouses, garden, or thrift stores.

"Thus far 92 individuals have gone through the Next Steps Program and are working, have rented a place to live, or both," said Cavale. In the fall, VRM is launching a capital campaign to finish their community center. "That building is changing lives," Cavale said.

For those not ready for the Next Steps Program the VRM offers a recovery program. This is not your Lindsey Lohan six-week drink-and-dash course. The VRM offers a nine-month residential recovery program where an individual moves into an apartment and starts therapy. Toward the end of their recovery they are expected to do job training, money management, or sign up for literacy classes or get their GED, whichever is needed. This program is free to anyone and the VRM works with the court system and accepts people who might otherwise be incarcerated. Counselors evaluate each applicant to determine a readiness for the program or a willingness to shed addiction.

All those in the Next Steps Program are given the opportunity to use the gym twice a week with a personal trainer as a part of an effort to live healthier lives. Behind the gym is a garden where people can get work experience and from which the VRM uses the produce in their soup kitchen. A long-term goal is to make a kiosk where the VRM can also sell its produce.

How do they pay for all this? Apart from a paid staff, the VRM boasts, according to Cavale, "two hundred of the most awesome volunteers." Too, a large portion of money comes from its many fundraisers throughout the year. The VRM's next one is Run for Hope on October 19th. This is a 10k race from Cutler Park along the St. John's Trail and back. Another big fundraiser is the Chamber of Commerce Christmas Tree Auction, in which the VRM's Board of Directors donates and decorates a tree.

Partnering with businesses, civic organizations and the city expands what the VRM can offer. Fugazzis supplies the soup kitchen's meal every Thursday night. The breakfast Rotary donated the fence around the men's recovery building, which made it a safer place to live and safer for the staff.

VRM also has a private donor base of businesses and individuals who make cash donations.

Everyone can get involved with donating to the Mission by shopping at its thrift stores, Rescued Treasures on Mooney and Simply Chic Boutique on Main Street. Donations of clothing, appliances, furniture or electronics can be made at the Mission. "We try to utilize everything that people graciously give to us. We want to be good stewards of everything we receive," said Ms. Cavale. "Even items that don't make it to the thrift stores are sold to a recycler."

Cavale said their vision for the future is to improve the women's and children's facility and build them their own campus. As she drove me around its many facilities, Cavale noticed some men lying on the grass in front of their former chapel. "I'm going to call somebody, " she said. "We don't want them to lounge. We want people to change their lives."

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Baseball Movie to Film in Visalia

Production Company Blare Media will hold a casting call on Friday, October 4, seeking actors and extras to play roles in a baseball-themed film set to begin production on Sunday, October 13, at Visalia Rawhide Baseball Stadium. Officials say the film, titled "FAN27," will shoot for two days in Visalia and one day in the Fresno area.

"This is a great opportunity for about 30-40 local actors and 250 residents to play extras in a film project that will have real Hollywood production values – filming right here in Visalia," Tulare County Film Commissioner Eric Coyne said. "While this is an independent film with a modest budget, this isn't a student film. This is a union movie shoot."

Producer Joe Moffitt said Blare Media chose to film FAN27 in Visalia because his associates were blown away by the superb baseball facilities at the Visalia Rawhide Baseball Stadium and the friendly reception local officials gave him while he was scouting the Central Valley for locations.

"This script was written to be shot in Shreveport, Louisiana, with a fictional team, but several of us fought to produce this project in California," Moffitt said. "Then we talked to the Rawhide organization, and now could not imagine filming this anywhere else."

Moffitt's creative team reviewed scouting images of the ballpark and the Rawhide facilities and were so impressed they decided seek permission to write the Visalia Rawhide in as one of the baseball teams shown playing in the film.

Rawhide General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft reviewed the script for FAN27 and agreed to help Moffitt secure the required releases from major league baseball to allow the Rawhide franchise to be depicted in the film – as long as Moffitt agreed to have the Rawhide play the winners of the film's climatic game and to have the fictional Shreveport team ultimately play the role of the losers.

"I wanted to get out of there before she insisted Tipper play a starring role!" Moffitt jokes, talking about his ballpark negotiations.

With the Rawhide organization on board with the FAN27 plotline, and assured of the positive nature of the film, City of Visalia officials were very supportive of the filmmaker's efforts to shoot in Visalia.

"Positive promotion of Visalia benefits all of the community. It provides an opportunity to showcase what's good about Visalia and puts our city in its best light for all to see," said Mayor Amy Shuklian.

Pendergraft acknowledged filming is not only good for the local economy – proving local lodging and dining for cast and crew – positive film exposure is good for Rawhide baseball.

"The Visalia baseball franchise is such a historical tradition both in town and in the baseball world, that you'll hear Visalia mentioned, or see Visalia memorabilia, in several popular baseball movies such as 'Bull Durham' and 'Moneyball,'" Pendergraft said. "Most of the movie mentions are of the Visalia Oaks. Now that the Rawhide name and new ballpark renovations have been around for a while, this film will give us a chance to showcase the new era of Visalia baseball to the filming industry. It's a beautiful ballpark, and we're happy to show it off."

Blare Media is taking a relatively novel approach toward making and marketing FAN27 by making a 45-minute short film aimed at a slightly higher target than most short films traditionally made with the film festival circuit in mind. With the traditional studio film distribution model changing in the face of runaway production costs, Blare wants to produce a polished short version of FAN27 with extremely high production values which can be used to secure studio support for a full-length feature movie version.

"Our hope is that the FAN27 feature short film will become the vehicle we will use to present to film studios to secure a funded distribution deal that will afford our local film company the opportunity to come back to Visalia, and the awesome Visalia Rawhide Baseball Stadium, to shoot much longer version as a major baseball feature film," Moffitt said.

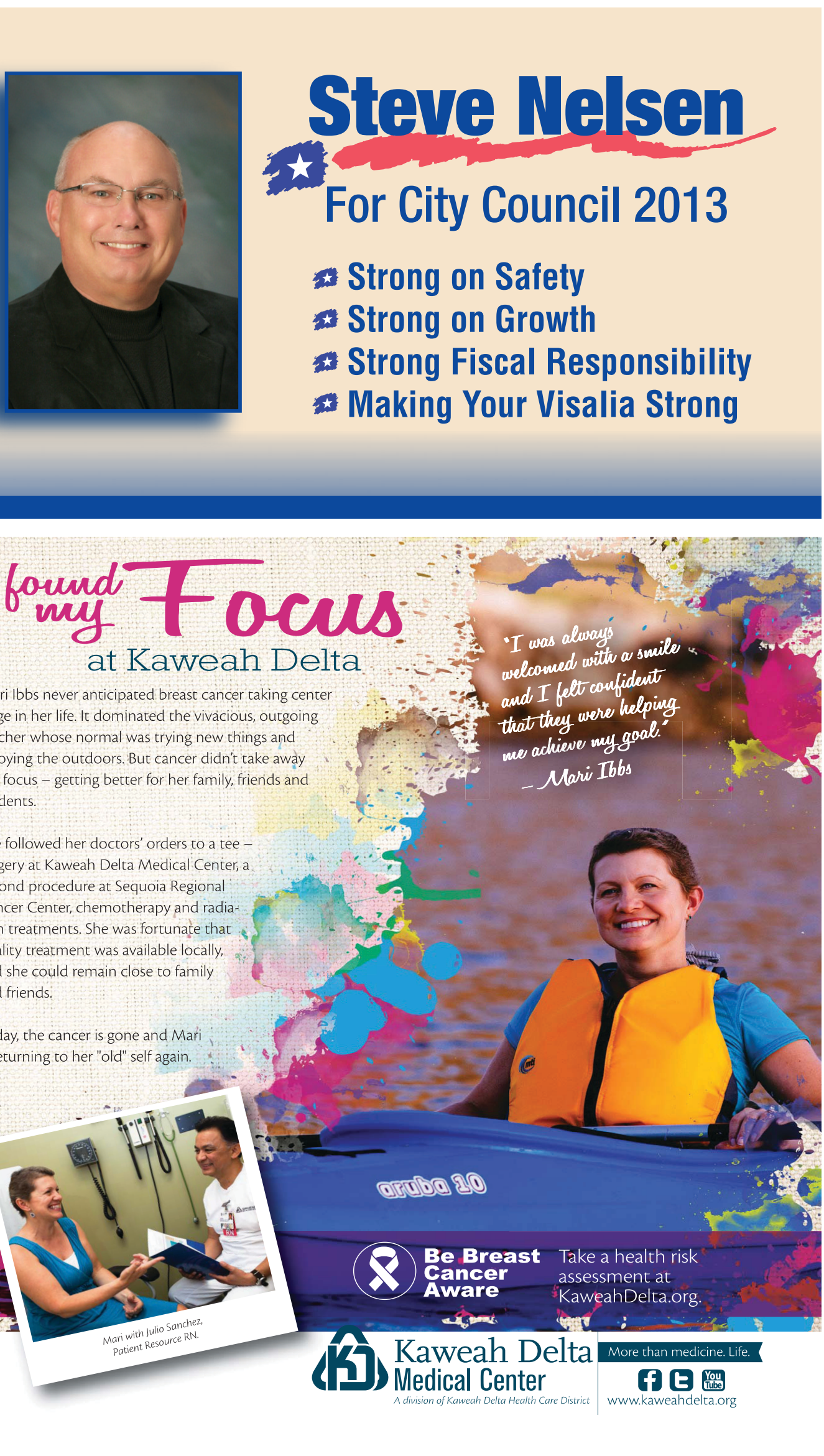
But before Blare Media think about filming a full feature, Moffitt says they need to finish filming FAN27 – set to shoot at the ballpark October 13-14. For that to happen, he needs to cast several key roles and find and select about 250 extras willing to watch several innings of baseball.

"We need people who know how to play baseball, and tons of people in the stands to play enthusiastic crowd members, ring cowbells and cheer on their team," Moffitt said, outlining the roles he hopes to cast during an open audition scheduled to be held at the Visalia Rawhide Baseball Stadium from 4-7 p.m. on Friday, October 4. "This an opportunity to come out, appear in a feature film and really let out your inner baseball fan. Face painting encouraged. Bring your cowbells!"

Moffitt is looking to fill many roles – extras in the stands, some speaking roles and baseball players who will perform on the field during several games.

"If you have theater experience from school or from a community production, or even if you just want to come down, enjoy the spirit of the moment and appear in the crowd shots, we'd love to have you," Moffitt said. "Don't be shy."

Moffitt intends to cast most of his remaining FAN27 roles during the Friday casting call, but encouraged people who want to attend the baseball filming and appear in the crowd shots who cannot audition to email him directly at irishonefilms@gmail.com.



Crossroads Program Offers Bright Futures

TAMMIE M. WEYKER

Penny*, just in her early twenties, is already a survivor of sexual abuse by a family member. "I was angry and bewildered about life and why I had to live these experiences...I just didn't know how to deal with it," she says.

Penny became suicidal and was treated for post-traumatic stress disorder stemming from the abuse she suffered. While in treatment, she dropped out of school and left her home to live with friends. Penny's risk of becoming homeless caused a member of her treatment team to suggest, and help her apply for, the Transitional Age Youth Crossroads Program. Since entering the program, Penny says, "My life has changed radically."

The Crossroads Program is funded by the voter approved Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), or Proposition 63. Crossroads is a unique and strategic program focusing on recovery, resiliency and wellness principles targeted toward transitional age youth (TAY) ages 18-25, who have been diagnosed with a mental illness. Like Penny, many of these youth have been left out in the cold when it comes to developing adult skill sets like budgeting, how to interview for a job, accessing options for higher education, banking, using public transportation and adopting adult behaviors. Crossroads seeks to meet the need for an adult skill set while preparing TAY for living within a community setting.

Prior to the passage of Prop 63, although there were programs for children and adults with mental illness, there was a wide gap in services for TAY. With no access to assistance, these young adults run a high risk for homelessness and psychiatric hospitalization. The Prop 63-funded TAY Crossroads Program now stands in that gap by providing a place where needed mental health services and residential support services co-exist. "MHSA has empowered mental health agencies to address serious mental illness issues with a focus on prevention and early intervention, partnered with supportive medical care," says Tulare County Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and Mental Health Board Member Pete Vander Poel. "The impact of MHSA on service programs means a positive progression towards a healthier community." Penny says the TAY program, "gave me a new family and helped build me into an independent woman who likes herself."

The TAY Crossroads Program is administered by MHSA contractor EMQ Families First and focuses on "decreasing risk factors while increasing proactive behaviors," says Christi Lupkes, MHSA Manager with the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency. "While the TAY are recovering, they're developing adult skill sets and life-planning tools." Under this model of wellness and recovery, medical or pharmaceutical support and the identification and development of goals are undertaken simultaneously, once a diagnosis of mental illness has been made. The paradigm is shifted from "an illness-centered treatment to a person-centered model," explains Lupkes.

This shift to a person-centered model is challenging at times, as it involves changes to traditional methods and core ideas about treating the mentally ill, including careful attention to cultural competency and the inclusion of the voices of the client and client's family members in developing the treatment plan. The concept follows the broad mission of the MHSA, which incorporates strengthening community services and supports for those with chronic and persistent mental illness; prevention and early intervention models to catch mental illnesses before they become severe; increasing the mental health workforce; more locations for provision of services; technology to manage a complicated system; and the development of novel ideas or practices that have the potential for being adopted by mental health programs.

The success of the Crossroads program is notable. To date, a total of 133 TAY have received housing and supportive services through the program (21 in FY 08/09; 35 in 09/10; 41 in 10/11; and 36 in 11/12). Since the inception of the program, approximately 85 percent of TAY who have completed Crossroads have received a GED or are pursuing continuing education. In 2012 alone, this education rate increased to 88 percent. Importantly, involvement in the Crossroads program greatly reduces the rate of psychiatric hospitalization. For the total TAY population being served at Crossroads, 71 percent maintained zero hospitalizations and 21 percent saw a reduction. Moreover, approximately 60 percent of TAY have transitioned to living independently (alone or with a roommate), while 20 percent live with biological or adoptive parents, and 10 percent live with a relative. For the TAY, that step of integration into the community is the end goal of the Crossroads program.

The two-year Crossroads program puts TAY on a rapid pace toward that end goal. The major focus in the first year is learning to trust and work with mental and residential health support teams, along with building relationships. TAY have to be up by 9 a.m., go to school, keep their regular therapist appointments, clean their apartments and be properly dressed in the morning – a structure many TAY have no experience with. The second year of the Crossroads program builds on the first year's knowledge by adding employment, house or apartment hunting, and practical life skills. "Crossroads provides youth with many firsts in their lives, such as structure and rules that are administered with caring and compassion. They learn skills to assist them with their future independence and ongoing recovery. The youth become a community in the true

Continued on p. 10 »

Obamacare

Continued from p. 1

To be prepared, the BBB has issued these tips:

* Hang up. If you get one of these calls, just hang up. You may be tempted to call back, but this will only give the scammer another opportunity to steal your information. Also, be sure not to press any buttons the scammer instructs.

* Never give out personal information. Never give out your bank account numbers, date of birth, credit cards or Social Security number.

* Don't rely on caller ID. Some scammers are able to display a company's name or phone number on the caller ID screen. Don't trust that the information you see is true.

* Get informed. Find out how the health care reform affects you. Visit the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Service's website HealthCare.gov.

* Get help. In the event that you give your personal information to an ObamaCare fraudster, inform your banks, credit card providers and the three major credit bureaus, TransUnion, Experian and Equifax, so that they can be on the lookout for potential identity thieves.

The FTC also warned consumers to be savvy online. The official marketplace websites are healthcare.gov, and in this state, CoveredCa.com. Before you visit one of these sites, make sure you type the address correctly. Some shady types have started websites that are just one mistyped letter away from the real thing. The fake sites look authentic, and some may even post official-looking government seals and logos to deceive you. Also, never click on a link that has been emailed to you. Scammers can embed malicious code and infect your computer with spyware. If you do visit a website, type the URL in the browser yourself.

Rite Aid to Pay for Disposing Hazardous Waste

Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward, together with 51 other California district attorneys and two city attorneys, announced that San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge Linda L. Lofthus approved a settlement under which Rite Aid Corporation will pay $12,324,000 in settlement of a civil environmental prosecution.

The judgment marks the culmination of a lawsuit claiming that more than 600 California Rite Aid stores unlawfully handled and disposed of hazardous wastes and materials over a six-and-a-half year period. This case originated during the fall of 2009 and expanded when prosecutors, investigators and environmental regulators statewide came together to conduct a series of waste inspections at Rite Aid facilities and at landfills throughout California. During the investigation a number of waste inspections were conducted on the Rite Aid facilities in Tulare County.

The statewide inspections revealed that during a six-and-a-half year period, Rite Aid transported hazardous waste and disposed it into local landfills. The hazardous products allegedly discarded included pesticides, bleach, paint, aerosols, automotive products and solvents, pharmaceutical and bio hazardous wastes and other toxic, ignitable and corrosive materials.

Under the final judgment, Rite Aid must pay $10.35 million in civil penalties and costs. Additionally, the company must fund several environmental projects that further consumer protection and environmental enforcement in California. Rite Aid will be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction prohibiting the retailer from committing future violations. Under the settlement, Rite Aid will pay $191,875 in civil penalties and cost recovery to Tulare County Environmental Health Services and $90,000 in civil penalties and cost recovery to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare.

Rite Aid was cooperative, and has adopted enhanced policies and procedures to mitigate the risk of improper disposal of hazardous waste products in California.

Moving forward, stores will be required to retain their hazardous waste in segregated, labeled containers so as to minimize the risk of exposure to employees and customers and to ensure that incompatible wastes do not combine to cause dangerous chemical reactions. Hazardous waste produced by California Rite Aid stores through damage, spills and returns is now being collected by state-registered haulers, taken to proper disposal facilities and properly documented and accounted for. Rite Aid has implemented a computerized scanning system and other environmental training to manage its waste.

In Tulare County, this case was handled by Deputy District Attorney Rodney Blaco from the Consumer Protection Unit and investigated by District Attorney Investigator John Lee, who was assisted in conducting the local waste inspections by personnel from Tulare County Environmental Health Services, and investigators from both the Yolo and San Joaquin district attorneys' offices.

Tulare County Library Programs Receive State Recognition

Two Tulare County Library programs have received statewide recognition for providing digital access to teens and more access to books for all residents. The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) awarded Tulare County's "Teen Digital Media Lab" with a Challenge Award and the "Your Library in More Places" program also received a Merit Award for its efforts to place book machines in rural, unincorporated communities as part of its annual Challenge Awards program. CSAC staff presented the awards at a recent Tulare County Board of Supervisors meeting. "CSAC is validating something that we already knew here in Tulare County: our library is doing a great job in finding innovative ways to promote their programs and keep the community engaged," said Pete Vander Poel, chairman of the board of supervisors. "We are extremely honored to receive these accolades and are proud of the library staff." The statewide Challenge Awards program honors innovation in county government. This year, CSAC received more than 200 entries from California's 58 counties. The entries were evaluated by an independent panel of judges closely affiliated with counties and the programs and services they deliver, according to CSAC. Tulare County was one of two counties with a population between 200,001 and 700,000 to receive a Challenge Award. Three other counties in the same population category received Merit Awards. "These awards demonstrate that the library is on the cutting edge in finding new ways to reach every citizen in Tulare County," said Jeff Scott, county librarian. "Whether they are teens, residents of rural communities or other special groups, we look for programs and events that will interest and inspire them." Tulare County's Teen Digital Media Lab provides teens access to computers, equipment and software they may not have at home that allows them to express themselves. Whether they have an interest in making movies, writing a novel or screenplay, taking pictures or drawing and painting, teens are provided the tools to help. During the program's first six months, participation grew from 7 to 69 teens. The Tulare County Library has made a concerted effort to place book machines in rural, unincorporated areas through its Your Library in More Places program. Book machines provide a low-cost high-impact solution for patrons unable to get to a library. So far, four book machines have been installed throughout the county, and the library plans to install more.

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Urban Art Replaces Graffiti on Wall at Cutler Park

Members of the Ivanhoe Boys & Girls Club recently painted an urban art mural in Cutler Park. The mural wall is part of unique career projects for Farmersville and Ivanhoe Club kids participating in art classes taught by instructor Erik Gonzalez.

In January 2012, Gonzalez founded the Urbanists Collective, an art group with a focus to promote the education and positive expansion of urban art within the community. The classes were made possible by a Fresno Regional Foundation Arts and Culture grant. Club members had classes at the Ivanhoe and Farmersville clubs over the summer. Questions about careers and career requirements were answered during an eight-session Diplomas to Degrees (d2D) class which ran concurrently with the Urban Art workshops. d2D is a program of Boys & Girls Clubs of America to encourage young people to attend college or other post-secondary education and to do well in high school. d2D sessions help kids explore careers, helps them research required education for each career and exposes them to college life at different types of colleges. It provides guidance on how to apply and pay for college as well and helps them examine what to do to be a good student in high school.

Through collaboration with the Urbanists Collective, youth in these two communities learned about Urban Art (also known as graffiti art or spray art) through a series of participatory workshops culminating in the painting of two murals. This art format is the perfect way to attract youth who are not drawn to traditional forms of art.

"The program was very well received by the kids and the end result is amazing to see at the park," says Galen Quenzer, chief operations officer at Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sequoias. "The wall depicts the importance of water in our lives here in the Valley, and when the St. Johns River is flowing, the water goes right by the wall becoming part of the art."

When completed the mural title will be "El Agua es Vida: "Water is Life." The focus of the mural is on beautification and water conservation outreach. The next mural to be completed will be in Farmersville and the theme will be community and academics.

Children age 6-18 can be a member and come to the Boys & Girls Clubs after school for $10 a year. To be a part of the solution and help kids to choose positive activities through Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sequoias, visit www.bgcsequoias.org or call 592-4074. Donations help children stay safe after school and become involved in their community in a positive way.

Nominations Sought for TCAG Awards

Nominations are being accepted for the third annual Local Motion Awards, to be presented during a luncheon on October 31, at the Visalia Convention Center. Awards will be presented in eight categories:

Sustainability: Recognizes a project or plan that promotes the conservation of built and natural resources, exhibits long-term sustainability and promotes smart growth principles.

Economic Development: Recognizes a transportation project that promotes economic growth in the region by improving access to employment centers or improving goods movement.

Transit: Recognizes a project that improves transit services or access to transit in the region.

Bike or Pedestrian Project: Recognizes the project that improves walkability, transportation or access for bikes or pedestrians.

Outstanding Road Project: Recognizes a road project that improves mobility, connectivity and access in the region.

Outstanding Citizen: Recognizes a citizen who has shown dedication and leadership in the area of transportation.

Outstanding Elected Official: Recognizes an elected official who has shown dedication and leadership in the area of transportation.

Outstanding Public Employee: Recognizes a public employee who has shown dedication and leadership in the areas of transportation, planning and/or project management.

Nomination forms, ticket order forms and details are online at www.tularecog.org.

An Evening with Guy McPherson Planned

Save our Sequoias! "An Evening with Guy McPherson" will be held at Three Rivers Arts Center, 41763 N. Fork Rd., Three Rivers. This community activism and fundraiser for Three Rivers Bread Basket Community Food Bank and the Grant Barrett Cancer Fund will feature Live Music from country rock artist Robby Armstrong with fiddling from Central California's Emily Kilimnik. Armstrong can be seen and heard in the upcoming Coiln Firth/Cameron Diaz film, "Gambit," and his new single, "Birthday Happy," is getting radio air play. There will be food, a raffle and much more.

For tickets, visit OrangeRay.com/event, Chumps Video or call 561-3370

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Crossroads

Continued from p. 7

sense of the word as they support and encourage each other on a daily basis. It is remarkable to see the growth and commitment of the youth in the program," states Timothy Durick, Psy.D., mental health director for the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency.

Crossroads provides support groups, exercise and classes on grocery shopping and budgeting, along with learning how to schedule a day. At the Crossroads wellness and recovery centers, TAY can learn to cook, use computer labs, create art and design projects all within the scope of a wellness model. Many TAY "were neglected or experienced systems and situations in which they were not seen or treated like persons," says Lupkes. "At some point during the two-year program, TAY begin to realize they can manage living within a community setting."

Penny says she was upset at first by having to adhere to the TAY program schedule and could not understand the structure she was asked to abide by. She also says it was a difficult transition, but she started to attend peer meetings and soon became involved with a local community group for women and girls, which led to her participation in the ACT Female Leadership Academy.

"When they get here they think this is 'just another program,'" notes one Crossroads staff member. "But the young people find that we measure success in a different way and that they are treated with respect and dignity. We're there to support and mentor them like a real family should. We believe in them, and we praise them." Penny says that, "the program mentors spoke in positive terms about who I am right now and who I could become, and I began to trust them. I began to gain hope that I could do the things that my mentors talked about...like doing well in school, and becoming a leader for other girls who had experiences like mine."

Penny's success story has just begun. She has received her high school diploma and has begun a community college program for an AA degree. Penny has also graduated from a local women's leadership academy and has been awarded an internship as an advocate for LGBTQ and immigration issues. She recently obtained her driver's license and now helps out with volunteer coordination for the TAY program. This courageous survivor smiles proudly and confidently as she talks about her young son whom, she notes, she has taken care of independently.

Though Penny was the beneficiary of the MHSA-funded Crossroads program, her son is also benefiting. Penny has chosen to take parenting classes and volunteers with her son's t-ball team. Penny is confident that if she had not participated in the Crossroads program, she would not be where she is today. "I have my goals, I've learned to be independent, and I really like who I am," says Penny. "My diagnosis has not defined me."

*Name and details have been altered to protect privacy.

AAUW Book Sale October 17

CATHERINE DOE

The American Association of University Women is having their semi-annual book sale starting on Thursday, October 17th. "We have more books now than ever before," said Carol Seastrom, one of the organizers. Their board has admitted that, with the demise of bookstores and the rise of e-books, their book sale can not go on forever. "But people are still buying books," said Seastrom. "We have twenty thousand available for the upcoming sale."

The one-week sale at the Sequoia Mall begins Thursday, October 17th and runs through Thursday, October 24th. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. daily. All hardbacks are sold for $2, while paperbacks go for are $1. CDs, DVDs, books on tape, and old records are also available. All of the money raised goes toward scholarships for local students. Unless it's a popular old classic, any yellowed or torn books are donated to a prison program or recycled.

Over the years the AAUW has come up with new ways to make more money on their books. Before the event opens to the public, professional book sellers are allowed to take the pick of the crop. Said Seastrom, "They used to come in on the first day of the sale and buy all these best sellers for a dollar. Now we have them come the night before, but they have to pay double."

Another member pulls text books and nonfiction books that look rare or especially interesting and looks them up on line. She finds out what they are selling for and offers the books for a little less on Amazon. Last year she made $1200 on-line for the organization.

"We get all kinds of donations," Seastrom continued. "We just received a box of occult items and a book of Tarot Cards. We are still waiting for that $100 bill hiding in a book but so far have only found a few dollars!"

Their next sale will be sometime in April, but the location has yet to be determined. The AAUW might be working with new mall owners and hopefully they will see the value of the book sale to the community and to their tenants.

Visalia Announces Current Public Works

STAFF REPORTS

The following City of Visalia Public Works/Development projects may interrupt major routes of transportation within the city:

1. Road widening and road improvements along Houston Avenue (SR 216) from Lovers Lane to McAuliff Street through Friday October 4, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Road will be reduced to one lane in each direction and may be subject to delays. Northbound and southbound Lovers Lane from Sweet Avenue to Golden West Avenue may have alternating lane closures.

2. Trench and bore to install conduit, cable and vaults and ground beds along Crenshaw Street between Hurley Avenue and Mineral King Avenue, Monday-Friday, 7a.m. - 4 p.m. through October 18.

3. Sidewalk, curb and gutter, and road repairs at Atwood Street and Douglas Avenue, Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. through October 11.

4. Trench to install conduit and cable along Floral Street between Murray Avenue and Main Street continues with shoulder closures and temporary lane shifts, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. through November 16.

5. Trench to install conduit, cable and underground vaults along Whitendale Avenue between Central Street and Fairway Street, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. through November 18.

Changes due to staffing, weather and other situations may result in changes to the schedule. For more information, call the Public Works Customer Service Line at 713-4428 or go to the City of Visalia website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us.

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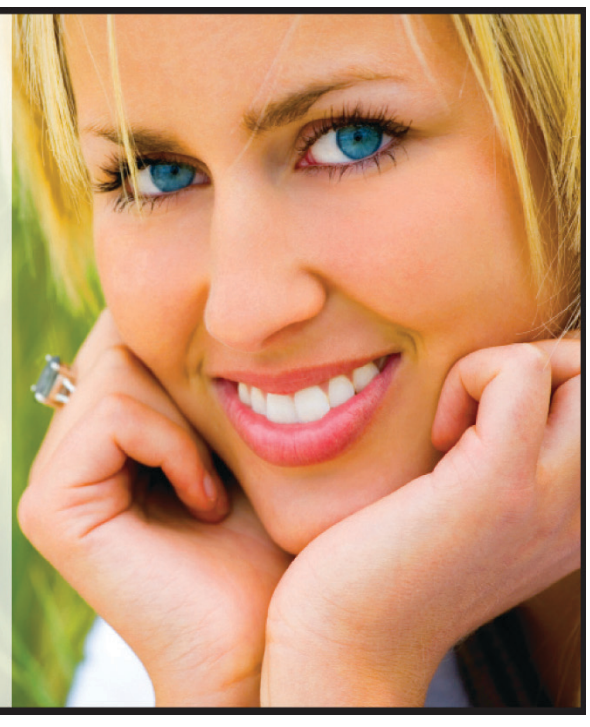


Tulare Astronomical Association Opens Renovated Observatory

STEVE PASTIS

The Tulare Astronomical Association has renovated its observatory in Tulare and will have its first event, an open house and star party, to officially relaunch the facility on October 12. The observatory has been closed for the last ten years, and the club has spent the last ten months working hard to reopen it.

The event will reintroduce the observatory to the public and feature the group's remodeled meeting room and new 12.5" Newtonian telescope. People will be shown the constellations and get a chance to look through the new telescope.

The new telescope will enable viewers to see features on the moon as small as a half-mile in diameter, according to Greg Eckes, TAA president. "We will easily be able to see Jupiter's four Galleon moons and more detail on the planets surface bands. When we look at Saturn, we will be able to see at least five of its moons and more detail in the rings like Cassini's Division. Nebula like the Orion Nebula, Dumbbell Nebula or the Ring Nebula, the Lagoon nebula, the Swan nebula and many others too numerous to mention will be brighter."

The observatory's "dome" rotates to any direction to view the night sky. On the dome is a motorized opening or door, which opens to look through.

The Tulare Astronomical Association Observatory

Tulare County is perfect for general observing and astronomy education, according to Eckes. "We have a great horizon, meaning that we have very little obstruction from buildings or trees," he explained. "The temperatures are consistent, meaning we don't have huge drops or changes in temperatures from day to night. Light pollution is not bad. We can still see the Milky Way from our location." Adding a more personal reason, he noted, "Our location is close enough to home that we don't have to drive hours to do observing."

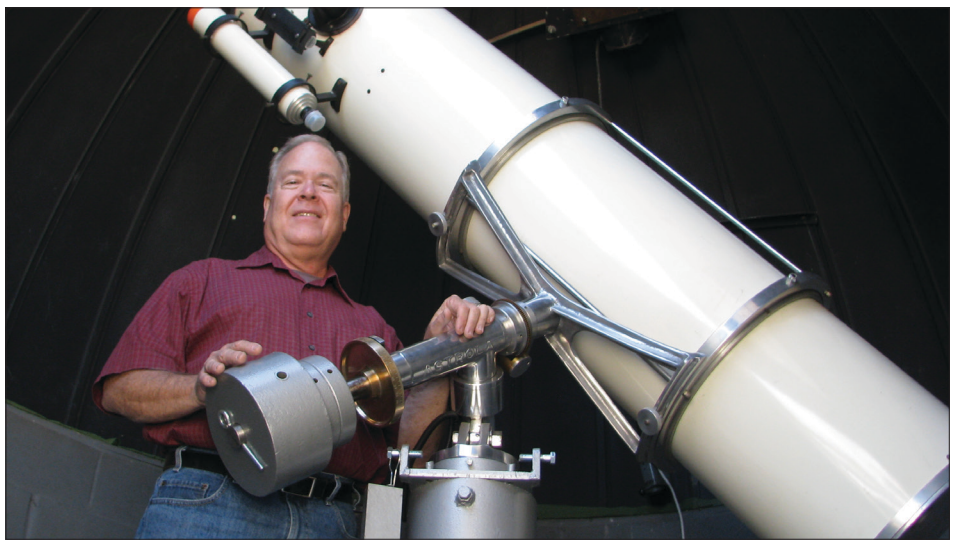
The first Tulare Astronomical Club was started in 1935 by a Tulare teacher (and later principal) Arthur Pursell. The club disbanded the following year, but was revived in 1957, by Pursell and Stan Manro, who were inspired by the launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik and the start of the space race. The club met at Tulare Union High School in Pursell's science classroom.

In 1966, the club had a 10" telescope donated to them, but it needed a home because it was too big to be carried around. The club incorporated as a 501(C)(3) non-profit charity in 1967 so that it could raise money to build an observatory for the telescope.

"There was a lot of excitement back then about it," Eckes said. "Arthur Pursell had a friend, Bob Heitzeg, that donated the land. Bill Thompson, of the the Tulare Lions Club, got the club to donate the dome for the telescope. Many other people donated the concrete work, block work, septic tank for the restroom, etc. It took the club about ten months to get the observatory built. It opened in October of 1967."

Time took a toll on the original observatory, however.

"After 46 years of deferred maintenance it was time to fix the place up," Eckes said. "The club officers decided to put some of our club money into fixing up what we could. The club has put a lot of sweat into fixing up the place. We are not done yet. We really need to raise about $15,000 to finish the job. The roof needs to be replaced by professionals. We stopped the leaking but now we have to get it fixed."


TAA President Greg Eckes with the group's new 12.5" Newtonian telescope

The TAA observatory is not the only one in the county. The Tule Astronomical Association, based in Springville, has private observatories owned by individual members, even though the club itself does not have its own observatory.

There is a growing interest in astronomy among many others in the county, attracting people with diverse daily lives.

"Our club is for anyone that wants to learn about the night sky," said Eckes. "Our club members are mix of people from every kind of background. They range from professionals in various fields to labors. None of us are scientists. We are all people that love the night sky and want to know more about it. Our club covers visual observing, binocular observing, telescopic observing and astro-photography. We present a little program at each meeting where we discuss topics like the moon and tides, what is a star, what is the life of a star, how do we measure the distance of a star. The topics are endless. We also cover astronomy in the news like the comet that is coming in November and NASA news. The group welcomes students of high school or college age. Students younger than that need to attend meetings with one or both parents, and be under the family membership.

"I became a member because I was tired of observing by myself," explained Eckes. "I wanted someone to collaborate with and to share the experience with. I found that if you are not an active member of a club, you miss out on a lot of opportunity to observe. You end up watching TV and don't go out side to look at the stars. Before becoming a member I could count on one hand how many timed I observed by myself. The club lets you share and learn with others. Groups are always more fun."

But Eckes occasionally enjoys astronomy without the company of a group.

"As an amateur astronomer, I love the beauty and peacefulness of the night sky," he said. "I want to know what is up there, where I can find it and to be able to see galaxies, nebula, star clusters with my own eyes."

The newly renovated observatory is located at located at 9242 Road 184, Tulare. The open house and star party will be held there on Saturday, October 12 from 7-9 p.m. Tickets are $5 for adults and children 12 and older; $2 for children under 12.

In addition to the open house, the TAA will offer a six-week "Visual Astronomy Class," the first time that the group has offered a class to the public. It starts October 8 and is limited to the first 20 people who sign up. For more information, visit www.tulareastro.org. Visitors can register for free to find out about meetings and events, and when the observatory is open to the public.

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Police Training Instructors Create Five-O-Fitness

Five-O-Fitness started in 2011 when lead physical training instructors for the Tulare/Kings Police Academy; Felix and Gracie Lara, met with a small group of police cadets at a park to put them through a "sample" academy workout. The cadets then invited their family and friends to the workout sessions and then people at the park asked to join in. Felix and Gracie had no plans on starting a "class" and were only there to help their cadets prepare for the academy so they could pass the police academy's physical training program. The name Five-O-Fitness, was suggested to them by one of the police cadets. Since "Five-O" was slang for "police," the cadet suggested we should start a "boot camp at the park" business and call it "Five-O-Fitness." Felix and Gracie liked the idea and obtained their business license, and that is how Five-O-Fitness began. Felix and Gracie were full time police officers at the time and police academy instructors. They were helping the cadets at the park for free. As new business owners they wanted to make their prices affordable. They decided to charge only $3 per class and allowed kids to participate for free. It's not the money they were focused on; it was and still is, the health of others. Both have over 12 years experience as police officers and enjoyed "serving and protecting." In their eyes, this was another way of "serving and protecting the health of others."

Today, Five-O-Fitness still offers boot camp classes for only $3 and does not plan on raising their prices. Clients can also choose to pay $30 a month for unlimited classes or pay as they go. Classes are held at Tulare's Blaine Park, Visalia's Blaine Park, Exeter's Schroth Park and their studio, located at 1929 E. Main Street in Visalia. Personal training sessions are only $10 per session and are available by appointment only. Clients work in a group of four, which makes it fun and motivating for them. Clients are counseled on healthy eating, given sample eating plans, and get their weight and body fat checked regularly.

The word of their affordable prices has since spread and classes at the park are growing every day. Families now have a place to exercise without joining a gym, without additional fees and without contracts. It has become a time of family bonding for a lot of clients. The kids work out alongside their parents and if they get tired they just go to the playground, which is still good exercise for them. With childhood obesity at its highest, Felix and Gracie will always allow kids to participate in Boot Camp classes at the parks for free.

Gracie Lara was known as "Officer Parras" in the City of Tulare and the City of Delano. She grew up in a Chicago suburb with low income and lived in a rough neighborhood with five other siblings and a single mom. With family members involved in gangs and drugs, she wanted to prove to herself that she could become someone not matter how hard her upbringing was. In 1998, she moved to California as a single mother of three boys to give them a better upbringing. She became a certified personal trainer with ISSA in 1999 and then joined the police academy in 2000. She graduated from the Tulare/Kings Police Academy in 2001 and began her career as a police officer with the Delano Police Department. In 2005, she lateralled over to the Tulare Police Department. In 2006, she became an assistant physical training instructor at the Tulare/Kings Police Academy. The lead physical training instructor retired thereafter and recommended Gracie become the new lead instructor. Since then she has been the lead physical training instructor at the Tulare/Kings Police Academy. In 2013, she and Felix signed a lease on a 2000 square foot personal training/boot camp studio. She also resigned from the Tulare Police Department to give their new studio full time attention. In September 2013, they signed an additional lease for the space directly next door and now have almost 4,000 square feet for Boot Camp classes and Personal Training. She is still the lead trainer at the police academy and will always have love and respect for law enforcement. She thanks Delano PD and Tulare PD for the opportunity to serve in their city and may soon return serving the community as a reserve police officer.

Felix Lara grew up with one sister in Orosi and lived in an area where gang activity was high. He avoided gang activity by playing sports and always knew that he wanted to be a police officer. In 1994, he joined the Tulare/Kings Police Academy at the age of 19. The following year, he became a Community Service Officer with the City of Visalia. In 1996, he entered the California Highway Patrol Academy. He began his CHP career in South Central Los Angeles and also raised his two girls as a single father. He transferred to the Visalia area in 2001. In 2007, he became an assistant physical training instructor for the Tulare/Kings police academy.

As police officers, both Felix and Gracie have always been involved with their communities. Both have been assigned to the Gang Unit within their departments and have tried to reach out to at risk juveniles. They enjoyed and took pride representing their departments with numerous community events. Every year, they invite others to join their team for the annual Race Against Hunger on Thanksgiving morning. They are always the largest running group at theevent and run in formation while calling out cadence.

So many people have told them how amazing it is that they started their business on "accident," but they tell them that they truly believe it is God's plan for them.They thank Him for bringing positive people that are always willing to help into their lives. Both Felix and Gracie practice and compete in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and have been Weaponless Defense Instructors for their departments. As a way of giving back, they offer free self defense classes for women that attend their church, the Visalia First Assembly of God.

For more information, visit www.fiveofitness.com, Facebook: Five-O-Fitness, Instagram: 5ofitness, or contact Gracie at 786-8250.

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News in Brief...

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY INSURANCE AUTHORITY MAINTAINS LOWER COST

San Joaquin Valley Insurance Authority officials recently approved an overall rate increase that equates to 5.1 percent and leaves members of the SJVIA paying up to 7 to 9 percent less for health insurance costs, compared to industry trends of 12 to 14 percent increases.

Tulare County Board of Supervisors Chairman Pete Vander Poel, who is also an SJVIA board member, said the main factor behind the rise in health insurance can be attributed to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). For example, of the proposed 5.3 percent rate increase to Tulare County's Anthem Blue Cross plans, 3 percent can be directly attributed to ACA taxes and fees.

"While rates have increased, the bottom line is we have been able to keep health care costs down over an extended period of time," Vander Poel said. He credits participation in the SJVIA as the main reason for keeping costs down. For example, employees enrolled in SJVIA plans did not have increased rates in 2012.

The SJVIA was created in 2009 by Fresno and Tulare counties under the advisement of Gallagher Benefit Services, which serves as the consultant for both entities. The organization was developed for the purpose of achieving greater critical mass for health insurance volume purchasing and reduced administrative costs. Since the SJVIA was formed, the cities of Ceres, Reedley, Sanger, San Joaquin, Shafter, Tulare and Waterford have joined.

The SJVIA has a current budget of $89 million and purchases health insurance for more than 12,500 employees and dependents.

FAMILY HEALTHCARE NETWORK OPENS PHARMACY IN VISALIA

Family HealthCare Network announced the opening of its new pharmacy, located inside of the Visalia Oak Health Center at 400 E. Oak Ave., Visalia. The pharmacy will be open Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and closed on Sunday.

This is the second pharmacy that Family HealthCare Network has opened, with its first pharmacy at the Porterville Health Center that opened in May of 2010. Both of the pharmacies serve FHCN patients, including those who are uninsured and on a sliding fee scale.

"We are pleased to offer this expanded service to our patients," said Kerry Hydash, FHCN president and CEO.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION TRAINING

Pacific Employers has partnered with the Visalia Chamber of Commerce to present the state-mandated Supervisors' Sexual Harassment Prevention Training seminar each quarter in 2013. The next workshop will take place Wednesday, October 23, 7:30-10 a.m. at the Lamp Liter Inn, 3300 W. Mineral King Ave., Visalia. This is the last workshop offered in 2013.

California Assembly Bill 1825 (AB 1825) requires California employers with 50 or more employees to provide all personnel who have "Supervisory Authority" a minimum of two hours of Sexual Harassment Prevention Training every two years. Training must include strategies for prevention and discuss remedies for victims of unlawful harassment.

The seminar includes a full breakfast, training seminar, a certificate, forms and guides. Attendees can expect to receive information and practical guidance regarding federal and state sexual harassment laws, harassment prevention and correction as well as remedies available to victims. The training is interactive and provides opportunities for discussion, role-playing and a Q & A session led by a qualified trainer as required by AB 1825. While all employers with 50 or more employees (including temps and independent contractors) are mandated to provide supervisor training, all employers need to consider this requirement as the new mandate for all supervisors, no matter how many employees they have.

Reservations are required and space is limited. For reservations or more information, call the chamber at 734-5876. Pre-registration is $35 for Chamber/Pacific Employers members; $45 for non-members. At the door: $45 for members; $55 for non-members.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR PRESENTATIONS ON NEGLECT AND ABUSE

The Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Prevention Program is seeking volunteers to help make presentations at Tulare County schools. CAN is a classroom-based prevention program designed to help reduce the incidence of neglect, as well as physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The program is seeking adults who are comfortable in a classroom setting, available a few hours each month during the school year, and committed to child safety.

The volunteers will make classroom presentations to first and fifth grade children in Tulare County. Last year, the team made over 800 local presentations. All presentations are given by teams of two people. Volunteers speak from a prepared script in order to ensure that all information is covered. The message in both grades is the same – say "NO," then get away and tell someone you trust, and keep telling until you get help. The program educates children to recognize and effectively deal with potentially dangerous situations. The CAN Prevention Program has established a training session for new volunteers on October 18. For more information, contact Kathy Johnston, at 651-0130, ext. 3710.

VISALIA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU HONORED BY ASSOCIATION

The Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau was among those receiving achievement awards in a recent competition with their colleagues from throughout the West. Sponsored by the Western Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (WACVB), the annual Best Idea Program showcases innovative projects and creative marketing strategies as submitted by WACVB members. This year's Best Idea Program awards were presented during the 2013 WACVB Annual Conference, September 18-20, in Los Angeles.

One of the four awards went to the "Visit 3 of California's National Parks in 3 Days - Sequoia, Kings Canyon and Yosemite National Parks" project, which educates visitors about the proximity of these parks by creating suggested itineraries (top five stops) to guide the visitor through the three parks with added information on extending their stay to see hidden treasures in the regions.

The project is a partnership between the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau, Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau and the Fresno Yosemite International Airport. Additionally Delaware North Companies – Wuksachi Lodge has come in as a partner, as has the National Park Service.

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Nelsen

Continued from p. 1

He sits on every committee Visalia has regarding water issues.

Yet Nelsen brings no personal agenda to his service. "I love going out and talking," he says, "and learning other people's agendas." And because Visalia is growing so rapidly--upwards of 200,000 in the coming two decades or so, according to Nelsen--he will, if re-elected, have the opportunity to hear many more of these. That is because, as is customary, Steve Nelsen would become Visalia's new mayor after the council rotation, traditionally upon the completion of the municipal election.

As the city grows--and expands--any mayor will face major new challenges, not the least of which is updating Visalia's public safety facilities. Take the proposed new Visalia Emergency Communications Center (VECC) for example. Nobody doubts Visalia's need for a new dispatch center, but questions regarding whether to attach police and fire administrations to this linger. Nelsen believes a single building, with a smaller footprint, perhaps, but a greater vertical presence is what Visalia will eventually construct. "Monetarily, the city can afford the VECC," he believes, "but it needs to be built not only for today's needs but 20 years out."

> "After serving on the city council with Steve, I can honestly say that every question he asks and every vote he makes, has the concern and welfare of all the citizens of Visalia in mind."
>
> *— Don Sharp, President, Downtown Visalia Alliance*

In 20 years' time, Nelsen sees the city expanding southward to just shy of Mooney Grove, southwestward as well, and north and slightly westward toward Highway 99. What Nelsen calls the "East Main Extension" is also on the horizon. This would be anchored by a new office building, the build-out of Imagine-U, and the proposed construction of the VECC.

But one problem that growth brings may never be solved to everyone's complete satisfaction: homelessness. The increase in this is "still a reflection of the economy," Nelsen says. "This is not limited to Visalia. It's all over the country. Everybody's dealing with it." In Visalia's case, Nelsen sits on a newly formed committee of council members, police and concerned citizens to address both homelessness and panhandling. "What we want to do is bring everyone to the table and figure out, one, what we can do and, two, get everybody on the same page and come up with tangible goals." Because Visalia, he says, is known as a compassionate and caring city.

Unlike the example set, say, by Porterville's City Council, Nelsen is happy with Visalia's. And while he regards unanimous votes as something of a rubber stamp, conceding that at times there naturally is contention, he is proud to sit with his fellow council members. "At the end of the day we're still friends," he says.

Sequoia Mall

Continued from p. 1

America. The company has specialized in shopping center acquisitions, development and management for more than 50 years, claiming some 874 at present.

KIMCO claims to have "pioneered the modern Real Estate Investment Trust era," and Sequoia Mall was just one of the hundreds of properties in their portfolio. A Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) is a company that owns, and in most cases, operates income-producing real estate such as apartments, shopping centers, offices, hotels and warehouses. Revenues from REITs derive principally from the properties' rents. Investing in REITs is a liquid, dividend-paying means of participating in the real estate market without having to actually own property. It is akin to buying stock.

With the "owners" back east, and selling shares of the property to uninterested parties, it's no wonder that Sequoia Mall has always been the ugly step sister to the Visalia Mall. For lack of tenants and the loss of Borders, the property went into foreclosure. In the summer of 2012, the mall came out of foreclosure and went back on the market, at which time several interested parties bid on the property. One of those interested was a large local developer. That sale never went through and word on the street is that the mall went back into receivership.

The property was pulled out of foreclosure and put back on the market about six months ago and was advertised as, "For sale on best offer basis." Again there were several players, one being local. Hopes were high at the time that, because a possible local developer was getting such a great deal, the savings would be put into a much-needed remodel, making the mall more attractive to tenants.

The mall's managing company remains the Schottenstein Property Group, which refers all questions to mall manager Diane Sherrill. Sherrill has had no comment. The few tenants left at the mall have not been kept informed and cannot get any information from Sherrill. They did hear from the janitor that the mall was sold to a local.

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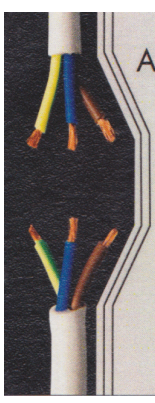
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Iconic South Visalia barn before...

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Many Factors Affect Ag Land Market

WILLIAM MENKE

As in 2012, there are currently more buyers than sellers in the Central Valley agricultural real estate market. The number of farm and ranch parcels sold in Tulare County has increased each year since 2009. Additionally, the price per acre for farmland in the Valley has increased or remained steady for the last four years.

Sales prices for farmland depend on factors such as location, soil, water, and production history. Fertile agricultural land located near the proposed California high-speed rail system's route is mired in uncertainty. Unpredictable state and federal water allocations have proven especially troublesome in dry water years like 2012 and 2013. As always, reliable agricultural production levels are never guaranteed.

Currency values, interest rates, and commodity prices also impact agricultural real estate demand. The value of the U.S. dollar has been trending higher and interest rates, though still low, are creeping up. High commodity prices have been fueled by increased domestic and global demand. The favorable commodity prices and consistent increases in farmland values have brought outside investors into the Valley.

While recent trends have favored farmland sellers, accurately forecasting an agricultural real estate market outlook is tenuous. Fluctuating economic conditions and political agendas can adversely affect commodity prices and land values. Currently, the state of agricultural real estate in the Central Valley is strong.

— William Menke is a Realtor with the Guarantee Real Estate Flex Office. He can be reached at William@Guarantee.com.

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Ruiz4Kids Fiesta to Benefit Four Valley Non-Profits

The 2013 Ruiz 4 Kids annual Fiesta fundraiser will benefit programs specifically created for Central Valley children. The event will be held 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 17, at the Visalia Convention Center. This year's theme is Let's Fiesta and will feature Mexican Cuisine throughout the night, a Casino de la Fiesta, Flamenco Jucal and the Ruiz 4 Kids live and silent auctions.

Blind Babies Foundation, CASA of Tulare County, Miracle League of Visalia and Wish Upon A Star will benefit from the Fiesta's proceeds. Last year, Ruiz 4 Kids distributed a record $270,000 to four children's-based organizations. For ticket or sponsorship information contact Ruiz 4 Kids at 591-5510 x2118 or visit www.ruiz4kids.org.

"Each of the beneficiaries is dedicated to making children's dreams come true whether it is granting a wish or simply providing the care and comfort every child deserves," said Kim Ruiz Beck, Ruiz Foods, Inc. chairman and Ruiz 4 Kids president. "We are proud to support children's dreams and those organizations making them come true."

The four non-profit organizations to benefit from the 2013 event are:

- Wish Upon A Star – This organization believes the granting of a wish is "medicine for the spirit." The wishes this organization grants provide a sense of comfort and support to Central Valley children suffering from high-risk and terminal illnesses.
- CASA of Tulare County – CASA speaks up for the innocent children who are victims of abuse and neglect by advocating for their safety and wellbeing by training community volunteers to represent their best interests and be their voice in court.
- Blind Babies Foundation – This Oakland-based organization is focused on providing critical early intervention and educational services to Tulare and Kings County infants and preschoolers who are blind or visually impaired through their "Off to a Good Start" program. Their family-centered service model provides for direct services in the natural environment of the family home and encourages every child's development to the fullest degree possible with careful attention to their individual abilities and needs.
- Miracle League of Visalia – This organization allows disabled children and youth to be a part of baseball in a way not otherwise possible. Participants are paired with volunteer "buddies" who assist participants on the totally handicapped-accessible playing surface in games, allowing everyone to get a hit and score a run in each inning. Several communities throughout the country have established their own Miracle Leagues to give mentally and physically disabled children the opportunity to participate in a baseball league.

In addition to honoring the beneficiaries, Beck will present the 7th Annual Danza Community Service Award to Marilyn Barr, executive director of CASA of Tulare County. Since 1995, Barr has compassionately focused on youth development issues and speaking up for those who have no voice through her work with CASA. She advocates for the most vulnerable children, while building and strengthening the organization. She continues to push for system change while representing the abused and neglected children of Tulare County.

"We are very proud to announce Marilyn Barr as this year's recipient of the Danza Community Service Award," said Beck. "Marilyn's compassion for children and their wellbeing has shown throughout her 18 years working with CASA. It takes an incredible amount of spirit and strength to help those who cannot speak for themselves. This is why Marilyn was the perfect choice. "

Ruiz Foods and Ruiz 4 Kids created the Annual Danza Community Service Award to pay tribute to people who have given an abundance of service during their life focusing on the betterment of the community. The "Danza" is known as a "circle of friends," a humble piece of terra cotta folk art dating back to Mayan times. Ruiz Foods and Ruiz 4 Kids believe the "Danza" is a relevant symbol of those who work to form a strong circle empowering the community.

Ruiz 4 Kids' primary mission is to make a difference in the life of a child. Ruiz 4 Kids was founded in 1990 when Ruiz Foods Team Members approached Fred Ruiz asking him to help them explore ways to assist families with children in need. Since then, Ruiz 4 Kids has organized two annual fundraising events – a golf invitational to raise monies for college scholarships and a fiesta event to raise monies for area nonprofits who are in need to grow their children-focused programs.

Ruiz Foods is a privately owned corporation with corporate offices in Dinuba. The company's El Monterey brand is the market leader within the frozen Mexican food category and the No. 1 brand of frozen Mexican food in the U.S. Its Tornados brand, introduced just eight years ago, is the No. 1 roller grill product sold in convenience stores. Ruiz Foods employs over 2,500 in three facilities in the U.S.

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Taste The Arts combines music, visual performance, and literary arts.

Taste the Arts Festival Returns October 17-19

The Annual Taste the Arts Festival, presented by the Arts Consortium, will be held in Downtown Visalia, October 17-19. For three full days, the community is invited to dig in and taste the many diverse and vibrant forms of art that have been grown and cultivated in our Valley. This event is free and open to the public.

The festival kicks off with the 20th Annual Waiters Race on Main Street at 5 p.m. on Thursday, October 17. Also that day, the Creative Center will host an exhibit reception at the Convention Center.

On Friday, there's even more to do with a free performance of the Enchanted Playhouse's "Camp Charming" at the Main Street Theatre at 7 p.m. The Cellar Door will host a free 21+ concert featuring Miner, Glenn Jones and the Joel Adam Russell Band. This concert is jointly produced with the Sound N Vision Foundation and the Tulare and Kings County Suicide Prevention Task Force. According to Caroline Koontz, executive director of the Arts Consortium, "The festival continues to grow through collaborations with valuable local organizations. This year is going to be even better than the last."

A cornerstone of the festival is the free Street Fair on Saturday, October 19, featuring over 60 visual artist booths, performing acts, workshops, a food sculpture contest and much more. This year, the Saturday Street Fair will span from the Garden Street Plaza on Main Street to the Old Lumber Yard on Oak. Two stages will be packed with performers including: the Gospel Whiskey Runners, Fresno Gumyo Taiko Japanese Drummers and the Visalia Opera Company, among others. Visual artists will display and sell their work, providing live demonstrations in pottery, metal work and painting. The Arts Consortium will also be selling a limited number of souvenir posters signed by artist John Friedrich who won the 2013 Taste the Arts poster contest.

Also featured on Saturday are Arts Visalia's "Taking Art to the Streets" exhibit and the "Visalia Visual Chronicle" at the Provost & Pritchard offices. Café 210 will host its Cup of Jazz event and the Loud Mouth Poetry Jam will present a free spoken word competition with audience participation.

Continued on p. 24 »

Oktoberfest Set for October 11

Oktoberfest Live features food, music and, of course, beer.

Oktoberfest Live, hosted by the Visalia Chamber of Commerce and presented by the Sequoia Beverage Company, will be held at Rawhide Ballpark in Visalia on Friday, October 11, from 5:30-9:30 p.m. The annual event features beer, wine, food (including specialty pork chops), artisan craft beer pours, and live music by Mr. Miyagi, Motel Drive and Mezcal.

Tickets are $40 and are available at www.rawhidebaseball.com and www.visalia chamber.org or by calling 732-4433 or 734-5876.

Tulare County Symphony to Play Liberace, Tchaikovsky

DONNA OROZCO

The Tulare County Symphony will perform an upbeat concert featuring a look at Liberace, and Tchaikovsky's most effervescent symphony, at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 19 at the Visalia Fox Theatre.

"Le Tombeau de Liberace" is a Vegasy, glitzy kind of piece, according to Music Director Bruce Kiesling. It will feature pianist Steven Lin, who was accepted into the Julliard Pre-College Division on full scholarship at the age of 10 and made his debut with the New York Philharmonic in Avery Fisher Hall at the age of 13. His vibrant playing at the 2013 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition was recognized by critics and judges.

"It takes this kind of young, dynamic artist to pull off this piece," said Kiesling. "You need great technique but you also must be someone who can have fun with it. For instance, one of the movements is called 'Rhinestone Kickstep.'"

Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 4" also shows youthful energy with what Kiesling calls a "barn burner" of a finale. Tchaikovsky's first three symphonies stayed within a strict Western form, but turbulent changes in his personal life, including his marital crisis, led him to write strongly personal and expressive music not sticking to strict form.

The concert's opening piece stays with the vibrant feel of the concert. Daugherty's "Route 66" takes the audience across that famous highway with great charm.

Tickets are $30 to $39.50 at the symphony office. Student prices are $10. Tickets are also available at 732-8600 or by visiting www.tcsymphony.org.

'The Gin Game' to Play at Ice House Theater

IRENE MORSE

Nancy Holley and Donny Graham in "The Gin Game."

The Visalia Community Players will use the lobby of the historic Ice House Theater to introduce theatergoers to the main characters of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, "The Gin Game." There they will meet Weller Martin and Fonsia Dorsey as they play a few hands of gin and get to know one another.

Veteran Player Nancy Holley takes on the role of Fonsia, a complex, somewhat manipulative but insecure old woman trying to adjust to her new life in an assisted living facility. If her previous life has been less than joyful, this one isn't promising to be a lot better… until she meets Weller and he offers to teach her to play a card game.

Holley said that she loves the tightly written script as the game itself becomes less relevant in the ebb and flow of emotion within the story.

The role of Weller is portrayed by another Player veteran, Donny Graham. Graham reports that he had to dig deep into the script to find the many facets in the character. "He is not just a contentious old man," Graham says. "There is goodness in him that is often difficult to see."

Graham wonders how the playwright was able to write dialogue that is so universal, "lines that came straight out of my mom's mouth."

Director Peg Collins was attracted to the script because "it tells a great sto-

Continued on p. 24 »

Exeter Fall Festival Marks 100 Years of Tradition with 'Yesterday... Once More'

This year's Exeter Fall Festival will feature many fun traditions from the past 100 years with local community organizations, service clubs and businesses bringing unique games, contests, arts and crafts, food and entertainment to this annual family event.

The events start with the Exeter Scarecrow Contest. The Exeter Chamber of Commerce has announced that "Scarecrows are Returning to Exeter" and will be on display at participating businesses for the entire month of October.

On Monday, October 7, at 6 p.m., the Miss Exeter Coronation & Dinner will be held at the Faith Tabernacle Family Center, Exeter. Advance tickets ($20) are required and are available at the chamber office (592-2919). Miss Exeter is a personal development and scholarship program open to high school juniors and seniors. Candidates are judged on community and school service, academics, poise and personality and the sale of raffle tickets as a fundraiser. During this evening, the candidates answer impromptu questions and model in a fun fashion show. Each candidate is sponsored by a business or organization.

On Wednesday, October 9, from 4:30-7 p.m., the Pumpkin Carving Contest and Family Fun Night will be held at Pine and E streets in Downtown Exeter. The City of Exeter Community Services sponsors this event and Miss Exeter candidates serve as judges. Immediately following the contest, games and activities geared to children from 4-15 are set up throughout the downtown area by businesses. Unlimited game passes are $3 per child. Included in the games are ring toss, face painting and apple bobbing. Every child wins a small prize.

Thursday, October 10, features the Exeter Chamber of Commerce Mixer from 5-6:30 p.m., hosted by Exeter branch of Bank of the Sierra, honoring Miss Exeter and Court. The event is free and the public is encouraged to attend.

On Friday, October 11 at 6 p.m., the Lip Sync Contest sponsored by the City of Exeter Parks & Recreation Department will be held at Exeter City Park, Chestnut Ave. and E Street. For information, call 592-5262

On Saturday, Oct. 12, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., the 5K Run and Pancake Breakfast will be held. At 10 a.m., the Fall Festival Parade will begin. Live entertainment in the park will run all day, beginning with Run4Cover from 10:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. Also featured will be Exeter City Dance and Lip Sync Contest winners, and the classic rock sounds of Limited Slip under the gazebo. There will also be arts and crafts, games, animal adoptions and food. The 7th Annual Car & Bike Show will feature custom vehicles, classic cars, hot rods and bikes on E Street between Chestnut and Pine streets. Call 592-2919 for entry forms or more information.

Event sponsors include Tricia Kirksey Real Estate, Exeter Dorksmen, Monarch Ford, ABC Bookkeeping & Tax Services, Inc., Central Valley Community Bank, Coldwell Banker J. Heaton and Associates, Hometown Emporium and Sunset Waste Systems.

Bellator MMA's Toughest Tournament In Sports is coming to the Visalia Convention Center.

Heavyweight Tournament at Visalia Convention Center

Visalia Convention Center will welcome Bellator MMA's Toughest Tournament In Sports on October 4. The night will feature the start of the Bellator Heavyweight Tournament, the highly anticipated Bellator Middleweight Semifinals, as well as a stacked preliminary card of California's best talent.

The night will be headlined by the debut of French heavyweight Cheick Kongo as he battles Mark Godbeer in the Heavyweight Semifinals. A bantamweight finals fight between Rafael Silva and Anthony Leone will also be featured, along with the semifinal rounds of the Season 9 Bellator Middleweight Tournament. After suffering an injury in the opening around, semifinalist Perry Filkins has been replaced by "The Juggernaut" Joe Pacheco.

Visalia's own Kenny Ento will fight in front of his home crowd and face England's Michael Page in an explosive battle. Page remains undefeated after beating Ryan Sanders within 10 seconds of the first round of his debut in March. Bryan Travers will be making his debut after appearing on the first season of "Fight Master."

Tickets for the event can be purchased at www.visaliatix.com or by visiting the Visalia Convention Center box office.

Contemporary Quilts Art Show Comes to Porterville College

The public is invited to see an exhibition of "Contemporary Quilts" by local artists at the Porterville College Art Gallery through October 24. Artists will be showing, through often non-traditional materials and methods, quilts that express their passion and their love for the quilting medium.

"I discovered that I love crazy quilting, and couldn't seem to get enough of piecing and embellishing blocks," said artist Suzanne Kistler.

The artists in this exhibition display a broad range of subjects and a wide variety of approaches to quilting.

"I am a lover of fabric, and quilting is a versatile art form that enables me to imagine, experiment, and create something beautiful and unique with it, in the company of other creators," said artist Elizabeth Shaffer.

Sue Rowell came to quilting rather late in her life. She was a cosmetologist for 30 years (owning a salon in Porterville) and, though she has always been interested in art and sewing, it wasn't until seven years ago that she began quilting. "Quilting is a constant challenge and learning experience," said Rowell.

Gallery hours are Monday through Thursday from noon to 2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m.

Visalia Rescue Mission to Host Annual Run for Hope

The Visalia Rescue Mission will team up with the Central Valley Roadrunners running team to present the 2nd Annual Run for Hope on Saturday, October 19. The event features a 10k race, a 2-mile race and a 2-mile walk along the St. John's River in Cutler Park in Visalia.

"This event promotes community health and fitness, with the proceeds benefitting the Visalia Rescue Mission," said Rob Brunell, co-organizer of the event.

The top three male and female finishers in each age bracket will receive awards. Chip timing will be provided by Sole 2 Soul Sports. T-shirts are guaranteed to all pre-registered participants. There will be post-race refreshments as well as water stations along the course.

To register or for more information, visit www.runsignup.com/race/CA/Visalia/RunForHope or call 740-4178.

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Pure Bathing Culture

Pure Bathing Culture to Headline Cellar Door

Pure Bathing Culture will take the stage at The Cellar Door in Downtown Visalia on Thursday, October 10.

It's a rare and beautiful thing when a band emerges fully formed, but it makes perfect sense in the case of guitarist Daniel Hindman and keyboardist Sarah Versprille's Pure Bathing Culture. Having backed folk rock revisionist Andy Cabic in Vetiver, the New Yorkers partnered up and moved west in 2011, settling in Portland. Building off their past experiences as musical collaborators, in a short time the duo has created a sound that is undeniably their own: soaring synths, chiming keyboards and shimmering electric guitars move in lockstep with bouncing drum machines.

Versprille's crystalline voice floats on top of it all with divine purpose. It's a sound that looks back momentarily for inspiration — Talk Talk, Prefab Sprout, Cocteau Twins — but then fixes its gaze firmly on the present.

Fresno's Brother Luke & the Comrades will kick off the evening, premiering their new full-band lineup.

Tickets for the 21+ 9:30 p.m. show are $7 and available at Ticketweb.com.

Calling All Racers!

Ready, set, go! Registration runs until Race Day, Thursday, October 17, to enter the 20th Annual Waiters Race in Downtown Visalia. A total of $7,000 in prize money will be awarded for the men's and women's divisions, in full and quick service. Space is limited to 32 racers in each division. Register online at www.TasteTheArts.net. Entries are $25 per racer. For more information, e-mail eventsvisaliaorg@gmail.com.

Kaweah Delta Launches 'Paint the Town Pink' Campaign

Whether by wearing pink, decorating businesses or sitting down to tea, the Kaweah Delta Breast Center is asking Tulare County residents and businesses to "Paint the Town Pink" this October.

The month's signature event, with elaborate table decorations, finger sandwiches, delectable pastries and women donning fancy hats, will be the Breast Cancer Awareness Tea at 2 p.m. on Sunday, October 13, at the Visalia Marriott. The event's featured speaker will be ABC30 Action News Anchor Liz Harrison, who will share her inspiring journey with breast cancer.

"This is a great chance for our community to come together in support of those in our community who have breast cancer, are survivors, and to honor those who have lost their lives to it," said Sheri Leimbach, a registered nurse and nurse navigator with the breast center and the Sequoia Regional Breast Cancer Program. "The greater awareness there is, the more likely we are to detect breast cancer early and treat it."

Breast Cancer is the most common cancer among women in the U.S., other than skin cancer. It is the second leading cause of cancer death in women, after lung cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.

Tickets to the event are $25 and available for purchase at 624-2463. Event proceeds will allow the Kaweah Delta Breast Center to provide mammograms for women in need.

Also, throughout the month, the community can celebrate breast cancer awareness by taking a free risk assessment online at KaweahDelta.org and clicking on "Health Risk Assessments." Taking a health risk assessment takes minutes online and those who are deemed at highest risk may qualify for a free consultation and will receive free newsletters on how to prevent breast cancer.

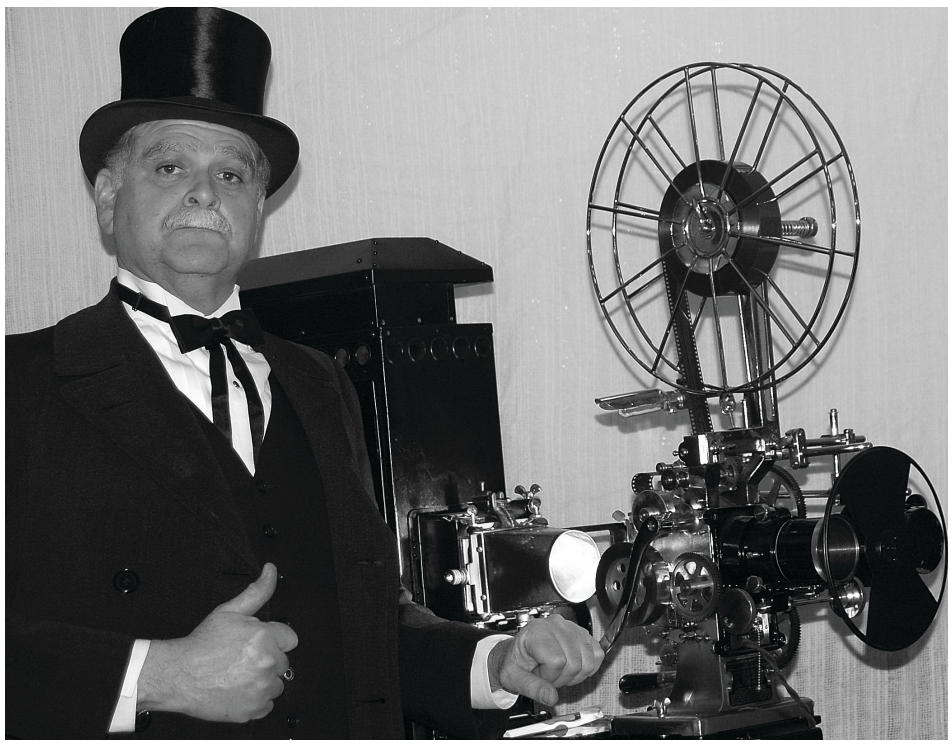
Additionally, the community can join the Paint the Town Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Challenge. Entering it is a chance to be recognized as "Best Dressed Business Display" or "Best Dressed in Pink." Here's how:

ABC30 Action News Anchor Liz Harrison

- Decorate your business in pink (window or indoor displays/decorations).
- Dress your employees/friends/family in pink.
- Fill out the Paint the Town Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Challenge application posted at www.kaweahdelta.org/events and e-mail to marketstaff@kdhcd.org or fax to 635-4048.
- Submit only one picture in each category to the website link listed at www.facebook.com/kaweahdelta. Deadline to submit photos is Monday, October 7.
- Get your friends, family and customers to like your photos on Facebook.
- Photos with the most votes by midnight on Saturday, October 12, will be named "Best Dressed Business Display" or "Best Dressed in Pink" award winners and recognized at the Breast Cancer Awareness Tea on Sunday, October 13, in Visalia.

Located at 4949 W. Cypress Ave. in Visalia, The Kaweah Delta Breast Center is dedicated to comprehensive imaging services for women and is staffed with mammography technologists with experience in breast imaging. Services provided include everything from digital screening and diagnostic mammography to ultrasound-guided breast biopsy and community breast health education resources. To schedule a mammogram and for more information about the Breast Center and its services, call 624-3209 or visit www.kaweahdelta.org.

Silent Movie Night to Feature 'Phantom of the Opera'



The Great Professor Rinaudo

The Sequoia Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society will present Silent Movie Night at the Hanford Fox Theatre on Saturday, October 19, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The evening will feature "Phantom of the Opera," starring Lon Chaney, with live accompaniment by Dean Mora on the Mighty Wurlitzer theater pipe organ.

The Great Professor Rinaudo will show the films using his restored hand-crank motion picture machine, as well as original 35-millimeter prints.

Hand-cranked projectors were common during the early 20th century, not because of a lack of electrical energy, but because there was no standardization of the number of frames-per-second projected. The projectionist had to speed up or slow down his cranking speed to compensate for the original unknown cranking speed of the photographer.

Known as photoplays, early silent films were accompanied by pianos, orchestras or pipe organs. Pipe organs were installed in virtually every American theater because of their ability to duplicate the sound of many musicians playing at once and also to eliminate the need of sound effects persons. Since only one musician was required, theater managers saved considerable money.

The two men responsible for the original idea of this event are in real life custom lamp and lighting manufacturers in Los Angeles, Joe Rinaudo and Gary Gibson. They will present comedy routines along with projecting the films.

Tickets are $10, $5 for seniors and students, and children 12 and younger admitted free with a paying adult. The Hanford Fox Theatre is located at 326 N. Irwin, Hanford. For more information, call 584-7823.

Budweiser EVENT CALENDAR

MUSIC

October

October 4 – Doc's Holiday, Motel Drive – 9:30 p.m.
A Breast Cancer Awareness Fundraiser will feature Doc's Holiday and Motel Drive at the Cellar Door in Visalia. $10 at the door. For more information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

October 5 – Ernie Sites - 7 p.m.
Mavericks Coffee House and Roasting Company, a venue for cowboy music and poetry, will present Ernie Sites, the complete cowboy entertainer. Tickets $25 at Mavericks, 238 E. Caldwell, Visalia. Seating is limited. For information, 624-1400.

Oct. 5 – Tone of Voice – 8 p.m.
Tone of Voice, rated No. 3 on the ReverbNation alternative charts for Fresno, will perform at the Visalia Brewing Company, 112 W. Main Street, Visalia.

Oct. 10 – Pure Bathing Culture – 9:30 p.m.
Pure Bathing Culture will headline this 21+ show at the Cellar Door in downtown Visalia. Brother Luke & the Comrades will also perform. For more information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

Oct. 10 – COS Fall HS Choral Festival – 8-12 p.m.
The College of the Sequoia's Fall High School Choral Festival will be held at the L.J. Williams Community Theater, 1001 W Main St., in Visalia.

October 11-13 – Visalia Roundup
The Cowboy Cultural Committee's 23rd Annual Cowboy Poetry and Music Gathering will be held at Clarence Ritchie's Barn -16338 Avenue 308, Visalia. Headlining the event is musician Nancy Lee, poet Gary Robertson, and The Saddle Cats quartet. Friday features show, peach cobbler and a dance. Saturday features dinner, a show and cobbler. Sunday morning a cowboy church will be held. Tickets, $40-$48, available at visaliacowboys.com.

Oct. 15, 16 – Mid Semester Recital – 3 p.m.
The College of the Sequoias Music Department will hold its Mid Semester Recital in the Sierra Music Building on the Visalia Campus.

Oct. 18 – Miner – 9:30 p.m.
Miner will headline this 21+ show at the Cellar Door in downtown Visalia. Joel Adam Russell Band will also perform. A free Taste the Arts afterparty is slated. For more information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

October 19 - Cup of Jazz - 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Cafe 210 will present a Cup of Jazz featuring fresh coffee and jazz at 210 W. Center Ave., Visalia. For information, 739-9010.

Oct. 19 – Triumphant Tchaikovsky! – 7:30 p.m.
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra kicks off its 2013-14 season at the Visalia Fox with a musical visit to Vegas, complete with rhinestones and furs. The concerto includes a stop along Route 66 and a bubbly carbonation of Tchaikovsky's 4th Symphony. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

November

Nov. 1 – Mary Kay - 7 p.m.
Mavericks Coffee House and Roasting Company, a venue for cowboy music and poetry, will present Mary Kay, multiple award-winning western performer. Tickets $25 at Mavericks, 238 E. Caldwell, Visalia. Seating is limited. For information, 624-1400.

Nov. 1 – Vince Gill – 7:30 p.m.
Visalia Fox Theater and KJUG will present Country music star Vince Gill at The Visalia Fox Theater, 300 W. Main Street, Visalia. The singer, songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist has recorded more than 17 studio albums, sold more than 26 million copies and won 20 Grammys and 18 CMA Awards. Tickets $40-$100. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

Nov. 8-10 – Marriage of Figaro
Visalia Opera Company will present the Marriage of Figaro by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information, visit visaliaoperacompany.org.

Nov. 9 – Joni Morris – 8 p.m.
Joni Morris performs "Legendary Ladies" at the Hanford Fox Theatre, 326 N. Irwin Street, Hanford. Morris performs the songs of such legends as Patsy Cline, Connie Francis, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Dolly Parton, Emmy Lou Harris, and other favorites. For information, visit foxhanford.com.

Nov. 10 – Meat Puppets – 7 p.m.
Meat Puppets with The World Takes, featuring Bonebrake of X and Strangevine will perform an early show at the Cellar Door in Visalia. Tickets for the 21+ event are $10 in advance and $12 at the door. For information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

Nov. 17 – COS Symphonic Band and Sequoias Winds – 4 p.m.
The College of the Sequoia's Symphonic Band and Sequoias Winds will perform a concert in the College of Sequoia's Theater.

Nov. 20 – Obits – 9:30 p.m.
Obits of Sub Pop Records will headline this 21+ show at the Cellar Door in downtown Visalia. Evelyn is also slated. For more information, visit www.snvfoundation.org.

Nov. 23 – Celebrate the Harvest – 7:30 p.m.
Thanksgiving is no longer just the beginning of the Christmas season. Tulare County Symphony Orchestra puts the focus on the great American holiday with a choral festival featuring favorite folk songs and hymns, performed by a combined choir. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

December

Dec. 7 – College of the Sequoia's Choral Christmas Concert – 7:30 p.m.
Tickets, $10, will be available at the door or by calling the COS Box Office at 730-3907.

Dec. 11 – Charlie Daniels Band – 7:30 p.m.
No one can fiddle like the famed country music legend Charlie Daniels. The man responsible for "The South's Gonna Do it Again," "Long Haired Country Boy," and his signature song, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," will appear at the Tachi Palace in Lemoore. Tickets go on sale on September 27, for $40, $60 and $85. For information, visit tachipalace.com.

Dec. 14 – Annual Holiday Concert – 3 p.m., 7:30 p.m.
The Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's holiday concert includes more than 200 performers showcasing the talent through Tulare County. This popular holiday event will include two showings at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Visalia Fox Theater, 308 W Main Street, Visalia. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Dec. 16 – COS Music Department Finals Recital - 3 & 7 p.m.
The College of the Sequoias Music Department will hold its Finals Recital at 3 and 7 p.m. in the Sierra Music Building on the Visalia Campus.

January

Jan. 18 – Locals Night – 7:30 p.m.
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's very own musicians take their turns as resident artists in front of the orchestra at the Visalia Fox Theater, 308 W Main Street, Visalia. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

February

Feb. 8 – American Brilliance – 7:30 p.m.
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra celebrates the Bull Moose president Teddy Roosevelt with special guest Clay Jenkinson portraying and narrating the tough as nails president in composer Chris Brubeck's musical biography and tribute. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

EVENTS

October

Oct. 5 – Health and Fitness Expo
The Kaweah Delta Community Health & Fitness Expo and 5th Annual Rehab Reunion, is set to take place from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Kaweah Delta Rehabilitation Hospital, 840 W. Akers St. in Visalia. The event will feature the Visalia Runners Harvest Run, the Minds 'N Motion Brain Injury Awareness Walk, a pancake breakfast, community booths, free screenings, a teddy bear clinic for children and archery demonstrations by gold medalist Jeff Fabry, of Hanford. Last year in London, Fabry became the first U.S. archer to win a Paralympic Games gold since 1984. For information, 624-5985.

Oct. 5 – 53rd Annual Cotton Festival – 7 a.m.- 10 p.m.
Corcoran will hold the 53rd Annual Cotton Festival–a day of celebration of Corcoran's community and number-one commodity. The event will kick off with Corcoran's Rotary Club Annual Pancake Breakfast from 7 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at the Veteran's Building, 1000 Van Dorsten. Tickets may be purchased from any club member. At 10 a.m., viewers can enjoy a downtown parade filled with various floats, horses, clowns and entertainment sponsored by Cost Less Foods. Kid's events will be held at Recreation Association of Corcoran, 900 Dairy Avenue. For those over 21, the Corcoran Chamber will offer a Bingo tournament at the Kate Boswell Center. The Corcoran District Hospital will hold a Health Fair. The day will end with a concert by the band August from 6 to 10 p.m. For information, call 992-4512.

Oct. 5 – Hats for Hope – 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
TUCOEMAS Federal Credit Union will host a Hats for Hope event at 2300 W. Whitendale Ave. Donations go to the American Cancer Society. Participants can make a hat, donate a hat or hat-making supplies. Robes are also needed. Cash and check donations will also be accepted. Donations can also be dropped off at any TUCOEMAS branch. For information, 737-5920.

Oct. 5 – Porterville Historical Museum Annual Yard Sale – 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
Find some treasures at the annual yard sale at the Porterville Historical Museum, 257 North D Street, Porterville. Donations will be accepted September 12 through Oct. 3. For more information, call 784-2053 or visit portervillemuseum.org.

Oct. 5 – Q & A with Dr. Guy McPherson & Michael Sosebee
Dr. Guy McPherson, eco-biologist and emeritus professor from the University of Arizona, and Michael Sosebee, environmental filmmaker, will be featured in a question-and-answer session at Frontier High School Performing Arts Center 6401 Allen Rd. Bakersfield. For information, visit orangeray.com or guymcpherson.com

Oct. 5 – EUHS Alumni Foundation Annual Golf Tournament – 8 a.m.
Exeter Union High School Alumni Foundation will host its Annual Golf Tournament. $50 per player fee includes green fee and tri-tip lunch. Deadline to register is September 27. For information call David, 280-2231.

Oct. 5 – Visalia Creative Writing Conference – 9:30 a.m.
Author Tim Z. Hernandez will give the keynote address at the Visalia Creative Writing Conference at Redwood High School. The event is open to all high school students and their advisors. Registration is $10. For information contact Melissa Link on Facebook or provide your contact information in an email to mink@vusd.org.

Oct. 5 – Living History Day and Craft Show – 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Three Rivers Historical Society will celebrate 1850-1910 with demonstrations and exhibits. Booth vendor spots are available. The deadline to submit applications is September 12. For information, call Tom Marshall 561-2707.

Oct. 5 – 1st Saturday in Three Rivers - 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Every first Saturday the artists, restaurants and merchants of Three Rivers open their doors in a town-wide celebration. A map and schedule of events is available at Anne Lang's Emporium or the Historical Museum. The flier shows all participating venues, art to see, locations and times for special events. A $600 Art and Gift Basket raffle will be held. Tickets will be given for every $10 in purchases (from any 1st Saturday participant, including food venues) Turn then in to Nadi's Gallery anytime throughout the day. The drawing will be at 5 p.m. You do not have to be present to win. For information, visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

Oct. 5 – Charity Poker Tournament – 11 a.m.
Fred Ex will host a Charity Poker Tournament to benefit the Exeter Bark Park at the Exeter Eagles Club. Doors open at 11 a.m. and game starts at noon. Tickets are $35 in advance and $40 the day of event. Raffles, lunch and a silent auction will also be featured. For information, call 592-5396.

Oct. 5 – Tea Tasting Evening Gala – 6 p.m.
All the Tea in China, a tea tasting evening gala, will be hosted by the Center for Integrated Medicine at 725 W. Main Street, Visalia. Moon cakes, Chinese hors d'oeuvres, moon gazing, performance and tea tasting featured. Bring an Asian tea cup to sample various types of teas and a stand-alone candle/lantern for evening light. Proceeds will benefit the Asian Cultural Society. Cost $20 per person. Reserve your attendance by calling 625-4246.

Oct. 5 – A&W Cruise Night and Middle School Band Night– 6:30 p.m.
Hot rods, classic cars and motorcycles, and performances by Divisadero, Green Acres, La Joya and Valley Oak Middle School jazz bands will be featured at A & W Root Beer, 2611 S. Mooney, Visalia. Lawn chairs welcomed.

Oct. 5 – Dancing with the Sierra View Stars Gala – 6:30 p.m.
The Sierra View District Hospital Foundation will host its 8th Annual Gala at a private estate in Springville. Members of the community will compete in a dance competition to raise funds for the hospital. For information or to vote in advance, visit svdhfoundation.org.

Oct. 5 – An Evening with Guy McPherson – 7 p.m.
Dr. Guy McPherson, eco-biologist and emeritus professor from the University of Arizona, will speak on Fire Ecology & Sustainability at Three Rivers Arts Center, 41763 N. Fork Rd. The fundraiser dinner will benefit Three Rivers Bread Basket Community Food Bank and the Grant Barrett Cancer Fund. Also featured will be Country Rock artist Robby Armstrong with fiddling from Central California's Emily Kilimnik. Tickets are limited. Visit orangeray.com or call 561-3370.

Oct. 6 – Making Strides Against Breast Cancer of Central Valley – 7 a.m.
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, a non-competitive 5k fundraising walk, will honor and celebrate breast cancer survivors, educate women about prevention and early detection, and raise money to fund lifesaving research and support programs to help eliminate breast cancer. Registration begins at 7 a.m. and the program begins at 8 a.m. For information, visit MakingStridesWalk.org/CentralValley or MakingStridesCentralValley@cancer.org

Oct. 6-9 – Planning Under the Sun American
Planning Association California will hold its annual conference at the Visalia Convention Center. Keynote speaker for the event is Ken Allex, senior policy advisor to Governor Jerry Brown. For information, visit calapa.org.

Oct. 6 – 5th Annual Shish-Kebab Luncheon – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m
The St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church of Yettem is holding its 5th annual Shish-Kebab Luncheon at Visalia Veterans Memorial Hall (corner of Center & Willis). For a $20 donation, receive an authentic Armenian meal of Lamb shish-kebab, pilaf, gourmet green beans, salad, peda bread and desert. Dine in or out. For information, (559) 733-8741.

Oct. 7-12 – Exeter Fall Festival
Exeter will celebrate 100 years with a week-long celebration culminating in a parade and the Fall Festival. Sponsorship and vendor opportunities are available. For information, contact the Exeter Chamber at 592-2919 or visit exeterchamber.com.

See more events online ourvalleyvoice.com

COMMUNITY

October

Oct. 4-5 – Lemon Cove Women's Club Huge Yard Sale
The Lemon Cove Women's Club will have a yard sale at 32792 Sierra Dr. (Highway 198) in Lemon Cove on Oct 4 at 9 a.m. and Oct 5 at 7:30 a.m. Donations of yard sale items are welcome. Booth space is available for $25 a day. For information call 597-1416 or 359-4465.

Oct. 5 – Cohen Smith Replacement Blood Drive – 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
The community of Visalia is asked to donate blood at St. Charles Catholic Church, 5049 West Caldwell, to replace blood needed for the upcoming surgery of Cohen Smith. Smith suffers from a condition called Metopic Synostosis. For information, call 936-5402.

Oct. 6 – 9th Annual Lost Girls Breast Cancer Ride – 8 a.m.
The Lost Girls Motorcycle Club will hold its 9th Annual Women's Breast Cancer Ride to pay for mammograms, biopsies & MRI's for patients who cannot afford them or don't have insurance. The ride starts at Sequoia Imaging, 4949 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia. Registration is from 8-10 a.m. This is a women's only ride, but men can join riders at the luncheon at Dry Creek Deli, 33454 Sierra Drive, in Lemon Cove. Cost is $25 per rider and passenger includes a grand prize ticket, goodie bag, and lunch-drink ticket. Additional meal tickets are $10. There will be vendors, music, silent auction, raffles & 50/50. Grand Prize is a $5,000 paint job donated by Lacey's Automotive. For information, visit lostgirlsmc.com.

Oct. 9 – Porterville College Blood Drive – 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
Porterville College will hold a blood drive on campus, north of the Student Center. Donors will receive a variety of discounts from Valley businesses for dining, recreation, entertainment, and services. For information, call 791-2212.

Oct. 10 - Exercise Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicine – 6 p.m.
John C. Booker, M.D., will be the speaker as part of The Lifestyle Center's free monthly wellness series at 5105 W. Cypress Ave. For more information, call 624-3400.

Oct. 10 – Raven Poetry and Stories at the Library – 6 :30 p.m.
Three Rivers' month-long Annual Raven Festival continues with raven poetry and stories at the library. Best selling author, and English instructor, Christina Lynch will read Edgar Alan Poe's poem, "The Raven", and her original Three Rivers Parody of Poe's poem. Call 561-3246 for information.

Oct. 11 – Intro to Microsoft Office – 8:30 a.m.
Tulare Public Library computer class will be held. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the library's research and information desk.

Oct. 12 – Wiskerino Contest Awards
Exeter Optimist International will judge and award the winners of its Wiskerino Contest at the Exeter Fall Festival in Exeter City Park. The beard-growing contest runs from August through Oct. 12. For information, call Reggie Ellis at 592-3171.

Oct. 12 – Mensa Test – 10 a.m.
Tulare Kings Mensa will offer the Mensa Test at the Tulare County Office of Education Building, 2637 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia. The fee for the two-hour test is $40. Registration is required and may be made by calling 280-9774.

Oct. 12 – Second Saturday Book Club – 11 a.m.
The Tulare Public Library Second Saturday Book Club will meet in the Charter Room to discuss "Me Before You." To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the library's research and information desk.

Oct. 17th – Friends of the Tulare Public Library Meeting – 6 p.m
Consider joining the Friends of the Library. Attend the next meeting in the Tulare Public Library Charter Room.

Oct. 18 - Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Program Training – 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
The Child Abuse and Neglect (C.A.N.) Prevention Program is seeking volunteers to help make presentations at Tulare County schools. C.A.N. is a classroom-based prevention program designed to help reduce the incidence of neglect, as well as physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The C.A.N. Prevention Program will hold a training session for new volunteers on Oct. 18 at its offices at 7000 Doe Avenue, Building 700 in Visalia. Volunteers interested in attending the training must first complete an application by Oct. 11. The application can be found online at www.tcoe.org/CAN. For information, contact Kathy Johnston, at 651-0130, ext. 3710.

Oct. 21 – Nov. 14 - Fat Burning 101 – 4:20 p.m.-5:20 p.m.
Porterville College Community will offer a non-credit course Mondays-Thursdays in the campus Fitness Center. Cost is $40 per person. For more information on Community Education Classes, call 791-2492 or visit portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

ART

Oct. 1-25 – Utopia : Dystopia
Utopia : Dystopia featuring works by Eric Waterkotte and Nick Potter will be on exhibit at the College of the Sequoias Art Gallery. The COS Art Gallery is free and open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The gallery is located in Kaweah Building, Room 214. For information, call 737-4861.

Oct. 4 – Sierra Wonders Book Debut and Art Show – 5:30-8 p.m.
The Arts Alliance of Three Rivers unveils its new publication, Sierra Wonders, with an opening celebration and art show at the Three Rivers Memorial Building. The art show continues Oct. 5 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Proceeds will go to the Jonnum-Young Scholarship Fund to inspiring young artists. For information, visit artsalliancethreerivers.org.

Oct. 12 – Raven Arts and Crafts at the Three Rivers Library, 11 - 1 p.m.
Three Rivers month-long Raven Festival continues with arts and crafts at the library. Call (818) 625-7815 for details.

Oct. 17-19 – Taste The Arts
The annual Taste the Arts presented by the Arts Consortium, the county's nonprofit arts council, celebrates the rich artistic and cultural heritage of the county communities. Scheduled activities allow the community to taste, sample and literally dig into the many vibrant forms of art grown and cultivated right here in our fertile Central Valley. For more information on the 3-day Taste the Arts Festival call the Arts Consortium at 802-3266 or visit, artsconsortium.org.

Justice Run Recognizes Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward will host the 3rd Annual Justice Run 5K race/1 mile walk at Mooney Grove Park on Saturday, October 12, as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Proceeds will benefit Family Services of Tulare County and the Central California Family Crisis Center, which provide shelter and other services to victims of domestic violence and their children. Participants are also encouraged to bring unopened toiletry items (hotel sized shampoo, lotion and soap) to the event to donate to the shelters.

The 2012 Justice Run welcomed over 400 participants and raised $12,000. Proceeds helped to fund housing and supportive services for victims and their families. These services include emergency assistance (such as transportation and food) counseling and long-term housing support.

"Domestic violence is an assault on the very fabric of our society – the family," said Ward. "It has far-reaching and devastating effects resulting in mental and physical trauma to women and children that seriously affects our community and schools. These effects have led me to create an enhanced prosecution team and triple the number the number of prosecutors who focus exclusively on prosecuting those who would attempt to harm our families and our way of life. The Office of the District Attorney is taking a greater stand against domestic violence. Please join me in standing up against domestic violence by lending your support to the Justice Run."

The 2012 Justice Run welcomed over 400 participants and raised $12,000.

Members of law enforcement agencies and fire departments in Tulare County are invited to participate in the Justice Run as a competition among agencies. The first team member to cross the finish line will receive a plaque for his or her agency to commemorate the event.

Partner agencies will have informational booth displays at the park and the District Attorney's Office will provide information on its Victim/Witness Assistance Program.

Participants can register now through race-day. Registration is $30 per person and includes an event "tech" shirt (while supplies last) and goody bag.

Registration forms are available at www.da-tulareco.org/justicerun.htm to mail in; online on Active.com using a credit card (a small processing fee will be applied to online registrations); at Sole 2 Sole Sports, 4241 S. Mooney Blvd. Visalia; or at the Victim/Witness Assistance Program of the District Attorney's Office, 221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 264, Visalia.

Completed forms and checks payable to Family Services of Tulare County - Justice Run should be mailed to: DA Victim/Witness Program Justice Run, 221 S. Mooney Blvd. Room 264, Visalia, CA 93291. For sponsorship opportunities, contact Jennifer Lightfoot, Victim Witness Program director at 636-5471.

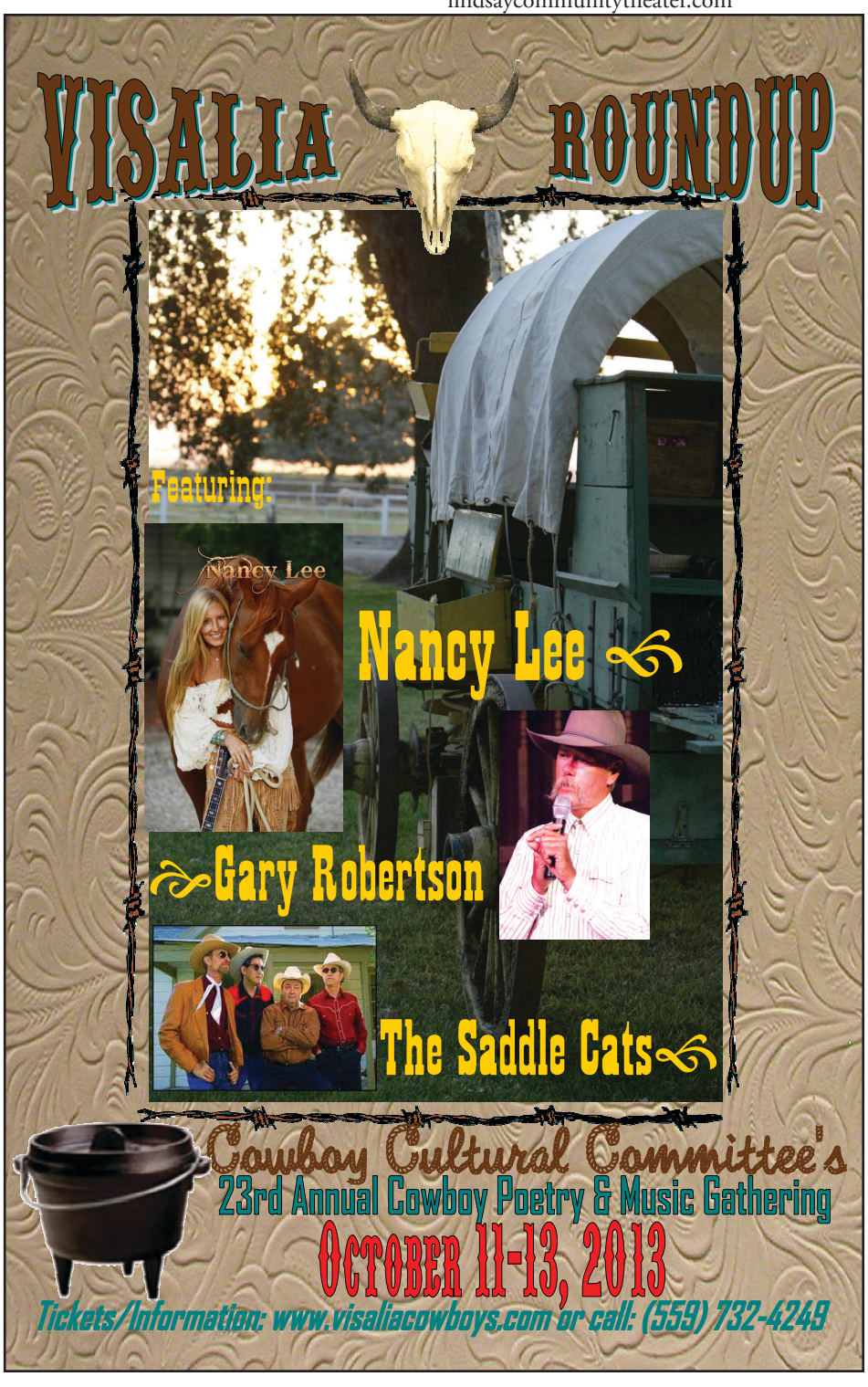
THEATER

Oct. 4-6 & 10-12 – How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying
Encore Theatre Company presents this musical satire at the Encore Theatre, 324 South N Street, Tulare. For more information, visit www.tulareencoretheatre.org.

Oct. 4-6 – The Gin Game
(See article on page 17.)

Oct. 11-13 & 17-19 – A Midsummer Night's Dream
The College of the Sequoias Theater Department will present A Midsummer Night's Dream. The shows begin at 7:30 p.m., with two matinee performances scheduled on Oct. 13 and Oct. 19 at 2 p.m. Tickets are $12, $10 for students and seniors. For tickets, call 730-3907.

Oct. 11, 18 – Rocky Horror Show – Midnight
Rocky Horror Show is about a lonely, transvestite space alien who creates his very own love slave, Rocky. It just goes downhill from there. Admission is free. Donations welcome. The show will also be presented at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 12 and 19. The Lindsay Community Theater is located at 190 N. Elmwood, Lindsay. For information, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.com



Westgate Gardens to Host Annual Car Show

Valley car enthusiasts showed off their cars at last year's event.

Westgate Gardens Care Center will host its Second Annual Classic Car Show from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 12. This free family event will feature activities, food and music, as well as a 50/50 raffle and other prizes.

Car clubs and enthusiasts from all over the Valley will show off their hot rods, Model T's, stock cars and other vehicles. Trophies will be awarded, and registration for vehicles will be accepted up to the morning of the event.

There will be face painting and bounce houses for children. Local vendor booths will display a variety of products and services available to the public. Free lunch will be provided those in attendance.

Westgate Gardens Care Center is currently caring for 140 local residents, offering 24-hour nursing care and short-term rehabilitation services including physical, speech and occupational therapy.

Westgate Gardens is at 4525 W. Tulare Ave. in Visalia. For more information and to see pictures from the center's previous car shows, visit www.facebook.com/WestgateGardensCareCenter.

Garcia to Teach Hand-Bound Book Workshop

The autumn fine art workshop from the Arts Alliance of Three Rivers, "Crinkly Inkly Bookmaking," will be taught by Helen Shafer Garcia, a mixed media artist from the San Diego area. The two-day workshop will be held on October 19-20, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Saint Anthony Retreat in Three Rivers.

Participants will explore a special batik-like technique with Masa rice paper to create two extraordinary "inkly crinkly books" – multi-signature, end-band, hand-bound books.

Books created by a special batik-like technique.

The batik-like pattern is made by crinkling up a Japanese rice paper, which has a surface suitable for paint. The paper is then soaked in water and unfolded to allow the crinkles to act like ravines in which the paint is allowed to flow, creating a crackled look. Watercolor pigments are added to the paper via "hue fusion," a "dropped-in-color" approach to painting.

"Instead of taking the brush and running it across the paper, you take the loaded brush, saturated with paint pigment and water, and touch the brush to wet surface of the watercolor paper," Garcia explains. "The pigments gently fuse together on the paper creating beautiful transitions."

The specially made papers will be enhanced with stamps, acrylic inks and watercolor washes. Then they will be hand bound with unique bookbinding techniques to stitch signatures with end bands.

Garcia is a painter, mixed-media, found object and assemblage artist and award-winning illustrator. Her whimsical style shows a love for living creatively with a studio filled to the brim with found objects. She is currently working with watercolor, pastel and mixed media

Continued on p. 24 »

'Orange is the New Black' Chronicles Life in Women's Prison

HANNAH GREEN

"Prison is quite literally a ghetto in the most classic sense of the word, a place where the U.S. government now puts not only the dangerous but the inconvenient—people who are mentally ill, people who are addicts, people who are poor and uneducated and unskilled." Thus Piper Kerman, author of her memoir, Orange is the New Black, introduces her readers to the bizarre world in which this affluent blonde woman will now spend 13 months. Piper is not dangerous or inconvenient, but she is sentenced to prison for a ten-year-old drug-related offense, and through her experience we on the outside are able to examine the prison system and the people who inhabit it.

The story relies on prison lore to reel us in; Piper isn't necessarily a motivating protagonist (being a bit of a white-bread hippie WASP with a predictably good fiancé, job and friends), but her environment is captivating, and we are able to try imagining ourselves in prison. The reason to read this novel is to see what a women's prison is like, in memoir style. Its strongest qualities lie in the surprises we encounter as Piper wanders through prison, the people she meets, and the anecdotal evidence she acquires to confirm or rebuff our privately held fears and thoughts about what prison is "really" like. Some of these surprises are pithy quips that seem to exist outside of any larger system of reason or institution ("Be prepared to show your ass every time," she advises us on visiting hours). Some of these disclosures involve more insidious contexts, and the most disturbing facts of prison life we learn about involve the routine racism scattered throughout Piper's 13 months on the inside.

Being a White woman, Piper doesn't experience prison's racism personally. In fact, we can easily see she's privileged, although Kerman, annoyingly, never uses the word privilege to describe her circumstance, preferring more flaccid descriptions like "lucky" or "fortunate. " She ascribes many of the bonuses she receives from guards and staff members to her blonde hair, or "Northern" status, the signifiers of her privilege, and yet she routinely neglects to mention her Whiteness during these situations, which is the obvious source of these windfalls. The way in which she continually shies away from using the appropriate words of "racism" and "privilege" is weak. Kerman may do this because prison, for Piper, is a mix of sweet and sour, of fitting in and standing out, much like a particularly austere sorority house. But prison isn't a short phase of life, and it isn't a place where you can act as an anthropologist or sociologist for thirteen months and then walk away. Prison is a place where blonde women with nice suits get shorter sentences than brown women. It's a place where even letting someone else use your apartment for the wrong reason can have the consequence that you help raise your child in fifteen-minute increments on the phone. It's a world in which the worst of our society—racism, sexism, classism, lawyers who don't care enough, judges who act with preferential treatment, a place where sad lives are made sadder—comes together in a tangible, physical assemblage, in a very real building with very real people who must live out the anti-fairytale in part because of bad decisions they've made and in part because not enough people care to do things like arrests and sentencings and prison support the right (and slightly more difficult, and more complex) way. Piper does seem to understand this on a small level. Kerman includes some items that make her seem sympathetic (she walks the reader through the absurd consequences of Mandatory Minimum Sentencing, and uses dialogue from other prisoners to explain how truly short 15 months is, and how things are when you're in prison for a decade, or life) and some that make her seem oblivious—there are frankly offensive moments where Piper doesn't seem to appreciate the gravity of prison. She's losing weight—and looking great!—due to the prison diet and physical regime, and she gets upset when she's now receiving two subscriptions to The New Yorker, and also when her visitor's list is full and she can't accommodate more than 25 friends, when many prisoners don't have their own children come to visit.

"Orange is the New Black" has also been adapted into a series for Netflix.

However Kerman skirts appropriate language, or seems to be unaware of the extent of her privilege at times, she does exhibit skill by not patronizing her readers. Her observations and reported statistics about prison never jump from fact to proselytizing, from statement to pontification. We're left to puzzle these ideas ourselves, do our own research, perhaps come to our own conclusions, or simply leave these ideas dormant, to ignore them as nearly everyone on the outside seems to do. But as readers, even if we choose to ignore the problems of the Prison Industrial Complex or Mandatory Minimum Sentencing, it is difficult to forget the women of the story. This is, again, a testament to Kerman's fledgling writing skills.

Although the memoir often employs green techniques, her characters are powerful, and she is already adept at writing dialogue. We end up mulling over the kitchen cook, the transgender woman, and the dignified bunkmate after the novel ends. These women have undecided fates; we can assume that Piper leaves prison and goes home to her devoted fiancé and her earmarked employment. The other women, who might go home to a grudging family, a life of backwards glances, or a skillset that is confined to prison jobs are remarkable and touching. Orange is clearly about the people involved. And so, even when Piper overlooks her privilege, even when the writing reads as unsophisticated, the novel is a success. The women who share Piper's prison are remembered and celebrated. The hero of Orange is not the protagonist. The heroes of Orange are the women who persist under grim circumstances outside of prison and who continue to use their fortitude, wits, and hearts when they lose everything else, including their freedom. Orange is the New Black is a humane novel that shows us the love that can expand beyond hard perimeters and hard time.

Spanspek Unlike Any Other Tulare County Festival

The Orosi Memorial Hall will again be transformed into a smorgasbord of sights and sounds for the Spanspek Music and Arts Festival on Friday, October 4. The eighth annual homegrown festival is unlike any other event in Tulare County, and it brings locally produced music and art to the Cutler-Orosi community.

The Spanspek fest features curated musical performances on two stages, multimedia art installations, and an interactive art station for youth. Co-organizer Cristobal Carrillo says the small space is designed to create an immediate and intimate experience. "Once you step into the venue," he says, "the hope is to engulf you in art and music."

Musical performers this year include: Fresno roots rock duo Strange Vine, fresh off an appearance at the MidPoint Music Fest in Cincinnati; Visalia Latin groove specialists Mezcal; longtime Fresno punk rockers It'll Grow Back; Orosi garage rock duo Werebear; and more.

Participating artists include up-and-comers from Los Angeles, locals from all over Tulare and Fresno counties, and dozens of Orosi High School students. The festival will feature Los Angeles-based multimedia artist Teresa Flores, Visalia comic strip artist Eric Rodriguez, and Orosi painter Sergio Huerta. Artists will be on hand to talk about their work.

Also, in a three-year tradition, the Spanspek fest has partnered with art instructors Elise Stringham and Jason Whited from Orosi High School to introduce the work of the community's student artists at the event. Students produce artworks in multiple mediums for class assignments, and they get to see their work displayed at the festival. Spanspek admits participating students to the festival free of charge.

Carrillo says the connection to local art students plays an important part in Spanspek's mission, which includes funding annual scholarships for Orosi High art students, hosting small shows at Orosi venues, and advocating for local music on the organization's website.

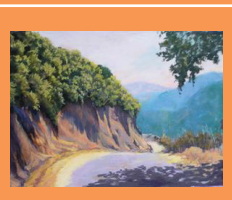
"The festival is one day, but Spanspek is year-round," he says.

Carrillo and Israel Flores, both former Orosi residents who are currently active in Fresno's music scene, co-founded Spanspek in 2006. Initially conceived as a way for Carrillo and Flores to perform at home, the event has grown to attract more diverse and talented participants and attendees each year. All festival proceeds go toward funding Orosi High scholarships, commissioning new works of art from local artists, and ensuring the continuation of the event for years.

The all-ages festival starts at 6 p.m. and costs $5 at the door. Visit Spanspek-Festival.com for details.

Have a meeting? Need a room?

Why not come to the Courthouse Gallery and Exeter Historical Museum, where there is a meeting room for most types of events?
With room for nearly 100 people, the conference room upstairs has kitchen facilities and a panoramic view. Need more room? Expand into the patio downstairs.
Located in the old Mt. Whitney Light and Power building, the Courthouse Gallery & Museum now showcases the best artists of the area. Come visit the gallery and museum and stay a while in historic Exeter, Tulare County's Mural City.



The Courthouse Gallery & Museum
125 South "B" Street
Exeter, California 93221
(559) 592-5900

www.exeterhistoricalmuseum.com
Saturdays & Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Saddle Cats will perform at the Visalia Roundup.

Visalia Roundup to Feature Cowboy Music, Poetry and Food

The Cowboy Cultural Committee will present the Visalia Roundup, the 23rd Annual Cowboy Poetry & Music Gathering, featuring cowboy poetry and music by Nancy Lee, Gary Robertson and The Saddle Cats.

The Cowboy Cultural Committee was the brainchild of Lani Hernandez of Visalia and each year, the event seems to grow a bit larger. From three or four Dutch ovens, the event has grown to 40 iron pots spread out on the iron tables used to cook on. This year's menu features a plate of tri-tip, beans and salad, and Dutch oven-cooked peach cobbler.

The weekend will end on Sunday morning with Cowboy Church outside under the big oak tree.

The event will be held at Ritchie Barn, located about halfway between Visalia and Woodlake. For tickets or more information, visit www.visaliacowboys.com or call 732-

Gin Game

Continued from p. 17

Whether in the 1970s when the play was first introduced to Broadway by Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn, or in the current day, these people exist in these places and are entwined in complex relationships.

The play contains adult language. Those involved with this production would like to remind the audience that these harsh words are being spoken by two old people who are filled with dread and longing and fear and are appropriate in that context.

"The Gin Game" opens at the Ice House Theater at Race and Santa Fe in Visalia on Friday, October 4, and runs for three weekends, with evening performances on Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m.

To purchase tickets and for more information, visit www.visaliaplayers.org or see their Facebook page. Tickets may

Arts Visalia Presents 'Taking Art to the Streets'

"Taking Art to the Streets" is a major new exhibition and series of community events organized by Arts Visalia Visual Art Center as a part of the 2013 Taste the Arts Festival. The exhibition will feature works of urban art, block printing and screen printing by the artists of the Urbanist Collective, as well as faculty and students of the College of the Sequoias and the Fresno State University printmaking programs.

In a twist to the traditional exhibition format, this exhibition will grow and change as the month goes by. New works will be added to the mix while other artworks will have new additions made to them during the show. Stepping beyond the spectator-only format of art exhibits, members of the general public who attend the Taste the Arts Festival will be able to have a hand in creating works of art on display by joining in on a series of participatory art-making activities offered as part of the festival taking place on Saturday, October 19, in downtown Visalia.

Artists featured in the exhibition, who will lead the public during the festival activities, include Erik Gonzalez and the artists of the Urbanist Collective: Orlycukui, Shortyfatz, DJ Agana, Reydiem, Matthew Hopson-Walker, Francisco Alonso, Jessica Robles and Kevin Bowman. Members of the COS Printworks Club and the Fresno State Print and Glory Club will also contribute to both the exhibition and the engagement activities at the Taste the Arts Festival.

"Taking Art to the Streets" will be on display at Arts Visalia through October 26 with an opening reception on Friday, October 4, from 6-8 p.m. Arts Visalia is located at 214 E. Oak Ave. in Visalia, and is open Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 5:30 p.m.

The project is supported by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation. Further support for the project and the Taste the Arts Festival is provided by the Tulare County Board of Supervisor's Step Up Youth Program, Sequoia Beverage Company and Pita Kabob Restaurant. Visit www.artsvisalia.org or www.tastethearts.net for more information.

Workshop

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creating contemporary images on paper, along with a series of icon folklore triptychs with wood, water media and found object construction.

Her watercolor illustrations have graced brochures, garden articles and advertisements of numerous international resorts and magazines. Her awards include four San Diego Press Club First Place Awards of Excellence in Illustration.

Garcia holds a BA degree in fine arts and currently teaches watercolor and acrylic painting at Palomar College in San Marcos. She also teaches mixed

Helen Shafer Garcia

media workshops internationally and across the U.S. She lives in Vista.

Registration is $210 for Arts Alliance Members, $250 for non-members. Fee includes lunch both days, provided by Saint Anthony Retreat. A registration form is available at artsalliancethreerivers.org or call 561-4671.

Taste the Arts

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The Arts Consortium will send a group of young local music students to the Tulare County Symphony's Triumphant Tchaikovsky, which kicks off the new orchestra season.

Leading up to the event, the Arts Consortium will also be giving away free tickets to the Visalia Community Player's "The Gin Game."

For a chance to win and to keep up to date on festival news and other goings-on, visit the Arts Consortium and Visalia's Taste the Arts on Facebook or www.artsconsortium.org, or call 802-3266.

Deanna Saldana's Pencil Art on Display

Local artist Deanna Saldana will exhibit several small original and print pieces of her pencil artwork at the Ice House Theater in Visalia in October. The exhibit coincides with the theater's production of "The Gin Game." An artist's reception will be held there on Friday, October 4, starting at 7 p.m.